A PATH OF REVERENT LOVE: THE NĀŚIRIYYA BROTHERHOOD ACROSS MUSLIM AFRICA

(11th-12th/17th-18th CENTURIES)

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Abstract

This thesis presents the history of Islam in 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} – 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century North Africa from a new angle. Our focus is the history of the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood, a spiritual community that emerged along Morocco’s Southeastern Saharan frontier during the mid-11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century. Based on the teachings of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī (d. 1102/1691), the Nāṣiriyya’s commitment to love, piety and knowledge helped to restore balance to Moroccan society and religious life during the tumultuous Maraboutic Crisis period and the early decades of the ʿAlawī Dynasty. Additionally, through its stewardship of the overland ḥajj, the Nāṣiriyya, and its sunna-centric reformist discourse, spread across North Africa, the Sahara, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula during the late 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} - early 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} centuries.

Our study begins by analyzing the Nāṣiriyya’s religious discourse within the context of the competing legacies of 9\textsuperscript{th}/15\textsuperscript{th} century Moroccan Sufi scholars Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī (d.c. 870/1466) and Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493). It then proceeds to document the Nāṣirī community, its scholarly tradition and transregional spread in light of its discursive tradition. In this way, we seek to shed new light on the history of Sufism, Islamic scholarship and sunnī reform across Muslim Africa during this critical yet heretofore understudied period of Islamic history.
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Invocation

In the name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate

May God praise and send peace upon our Leader Muḥammad, the motherly prophet, and upon his family and companions.

Praise be to God who guided us to this, for we were not to be guided were it not that God guided us.
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- The Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him.

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My academic journey in the Islamic Studies began at Rice University. Dr. David Cook first offered to teach me Arabic in the Spring of 2007. I am grateful that he welcomed me into his world and that he taught me with uncompromising rigor. Working with him gave me an accurate glimpse of life as a professional scholar and prepared me to embark on my academic path. After graduating from Rice, I was given the opportunity to continue my growth as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in Morocco. For two years I immersed myself in Moroccan language and culture, supported by my peers, especially Dr. Aaron Hrozencik and Erin Harte, as well as the Commissioner of the Moroccan American Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange, Dr. James Miller. Aaron and Erin’s friendship was essential to my success, while Dr. Miller’s support helped to germinate the seeds of scholarly exploration within me. It was during this time that I first learned about pre-Modern Moroccan travelogues, *adab al-riḥla*. The excitement this discovery helped to propel my application to graduate school at Princeton. I met Professor Michael Cook in August 2012 as I was preparing to move
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In March, 2016, I met Imam Fode Drame through a program sponsored by Princeton’s Muslim Life Program. This event changed my life and the course of this research. Soon thereafter, I had moved with my wife to Vancouver, British Columbia. We resided there for more than three years, soaking up as much of Imam Fode’s light and knowledge as our hearts and egos would allow. Needless to say, the more my heart opened while in Vancouver, the better person and scholar I became. All of the early drafts of my thesis were produced in Vancouver. Sitting at the feet of a true scholar and spiritual master, I also came to see my research in a new light. Imam Fode is responsible
for teaching me, inter alia, about the Qur’an’s seven noble characteristics and the horizontal and vertical dimensions of God’s light. I soon realized that these concepts were necessary to understanding the Nāṣirīyya’s history on a deeper discursive level. I am grateful to have been able to include them as a framework for my thesis’ approach, and I look forward to applying them in future research and more importantly, in my daily life.

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In conclusion, whatever I’ve said in this thesis that is true is from God, and anything else is from myself and Satan. I pray that God accepts what is good in this work as a source of beneficial knowledge and that He pardons the rest. I also pray that everyone involved in this project benefits from its blessings in this world and the next.

Thank you and may God bless you all.

- M. Conaway Schumann
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Introduction

You disobey God while claiming to love Him?
This is impossible to reason and disgraceful.
Were your love for Him sincere, you would respond to Him.
For, indeed, the lover is, to whom they love, obedient.

- Attributed to Abū ʿAbd Allāh Mūḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfīʿī (d. 204/820), eponym of the Shāfīʿī school of Islamic law

Study Overview

This thesis outlines the history of the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood, a spiritual community that emerged along Morocco’s Southeastern Saharan frontier during the mid-11th/17th century. This study analyzes the discourse and institutions that led the Nāṣirīyya to become Morocco’s leading Sufi brotherhood during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. It also documents the Nāṣirīyya’s spread across North Africa and the Sahara. In doing so, it seeks to present the first transregional history of Muslim Africa during a critical yet heretofore understudied period in its history.

To begin, the Nāṣirīyya’s story is a Moroccan story. The discursive and contextual currents that shaped their history arose from the particular features of Morocco’s religious and political fields during the 9th-11th/15th-17th centuries. When Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī (d. 1085/1674), the Nāṣirīyya’s founder, became a Sufi shaykh in 1055/1644, Morocco was in the midst of a profound sociopolitical and religious crisis. The sudden death of Saʿdī Sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr in 1012/1603 led Morocco’s reigning dynasty to collapse. For the next six decades, civil war between al-Manṣūr’s heirs, regional leaders affiliated with rural Sufi lodges and the emergent ʿAlawī Dynasty, tore Moroccan society apart. Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī’s (d. 1083/1672) eventual
defeat of Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilāʾī (d. 1082/1671) and his subsequent succession to the Morocco’s throne in 1078/1668 put an end to the so-called Maraboutic Crisis. However, stability did not return to Morocco until the defeat of the last rebels against Mawlay al-Rashīd’s successor, Mawlay Iṣmāʿīl (d. 1139/1727), in 1130/1718. Despite its crucial role in forming the discourses and institutions that would shape ‘Alawī Morocco, the Maraboutic Crisis period has received little attention from historians and Islamic Studies scholars.

While the Maraboutic Crisis is best understood as a political conflict, it was driven by debates over the nature of legitimate governing authority among Morocco’s political and religious elites. Beginning with the waning days of the Maṛiṇid Dynasty in

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1 According to the 13th/19th century chronicler ʿAbd b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, it is only at this point that stability and prosperity returned to Morocco after more than a century of unrest. See Kitāb al-Istiqāṣaʾ li-Akhbār Duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqṣā (Casablanca, Morocco: Dār al-Kitāb, 1954), v. 7, 97.

2 A variety of factors have led to this period’s neglect by historians and other scholars. It is difficult to fit the Maraboutic Crisis into the typical dynastic periodization adopted by many politically-minded historians, especially those in Morocco. Additionally, this period is especially difficult for Moroccan historians to analyze because of the questions it raises about the formation of the ʿAlawī Dynasty, which still rules Morocco today. Lastly, there is a general neglect of the of the seventeenth century in Islamic Studies overall, and particularly in the field of intellectual history. As recently as 2015, Khaled El Rouayheb stated that research into, “the intellectual history of the seventeenth century in the Ottoman Empire and North Africa” was “woefully underdeveloped.” He attributes this to the lingering influence of the “decline narrative,” which views the later periods of pre-modern Islamic history as one as time of cultural, political and religious decadence. See Khaled El-Rouayheb, Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 2. Moroccan historians Muḥammad Ḥājjī and Muḥammad al-Akhḥār both study the Maraboutic Crisis period, but from different directions. Ḥājjī traces its history through the death of the last Saʿdī pretender, ʿAbd al-ʿAbbās, in 1070/1659, whereas al-Akhḥār covers this period from the beginning of the ʿAlawī Dynasty in 1078/1668. See Muḥammad Ḥājjī, al-Haraka al-Fikriyya bi-l-Maghrib fī ʿahd al-Saʿdīyyīn, 2 vols. (Rabat, Morocco: Dār al-Maghrib lil-Taʿlīf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1976); Muhammad Akhḍar, al-Hayā al-Adabiyya fī-l-Maghrib ʿalā ʿahd al-Dawla al-ʿAlawiyya (Casablanca: Dār al-Rashād al-Ḥadīthah, 1977). An exception to this trend is the work of French historian Jacques Berque who addresses 11th/17th century Moroccan history directly in two studies: al-Yousi: problèmes de la culture Marocaine au XVIIème siècle, Le Monde d’outre-Mer, Passé et Présent 2 (Paris: Mouton, 1958) and Ulémas, fondateurs, insurgés du Maghreb: XVIIe Siècle, La Bibliothèque Arabe (Paris: Sindbad, 1982). It is worth noting that the most recent of these studies is over 30 years old.
the 9th/15th century, Moroccan society began to embrace a radical view of loving God and the Prophet Muhammad.

Influenced by the teachings of the Sufi scholar, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī (d.c. 870/1466), this view emphasized displaying one’s devotion to God and the Prophet Muḥammad through immersion in their remembrance, the embrace of the shurafā’ – or the recognized descendants of the Prophet Muhammad – as spiritual and temporal leaders, and in the practice of jihād to defend God’s land from its disbelieving enemies. This doctrine played an instrumental role in the collapse of the Marīnid Dynasty, toppled by a shurafā’-led rebellion in 869/1465. These ideas also bolstered the subsequent rise of the Saʿdī dynasty in the 10th/16th century. The Saʿdī family that used their status as shurafā’ and commitment to jihād to justify their rebellion against the reigning Waṭṭāsid dynasty (r. 876-961/1472-1554) of Fez. After a nearly a century of rule, the Saʿdī dynasty fell apart when al-Manṣūr’s heirs sought to preserve their power by forging an alliance with Morocco’s Christian enemies, thereby undermining their political legitimacy in the eyes of many Moroccans. During the ensuing Maraboutic Crisis, the call to jihād was used to oust the same dynasty that had used jihād as the basis of their rise to power.

However, as the Maraboutic Crisis deepened and the pain of warfare, division and economic hardship took its toll, many Moroccans began looking for ways back to peace and unity. In the political field, the ‘Alawī family proved themselves capable of unifying Morocco behind their status as shurafā’. In the religious field, unity was found in the teachings of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī, the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood’s founder.
Maḥammad b. Nāṣir³ was born in 1011/1603 in Aghlān, a small village in Wādī Darʿa, a chain of pre-Saharan oases strategically located along transregional caravan routes that traverse Morocco’s Southeastern Saharan frontier. His career began humbly. He memorized the Qur’an under the guidance of his father, an educated businessman. He continued studies with local scholars in Darʿa and the neighboring Tāfīlālt until he graduated as a jurist (faqīḥ). At this point, he returned to his home in Aghlān, where he became the prayer leader (imām) and sermonizer (khaṭīb) in its communal mosque. It would be easy to imagine Ibn Nāṣir living out his days in obscurity in Aghlān. But he longed for more, and soon set out to find a spiritual teacher to complete his personal and religious development. The sources do not clearly state Ibn Nāṣir’s motives, but we know that he was witness to the Maraboutic Crisis’ degradation of Moroccan society and religious life. While in Aghlān, Ibn Nāṣir was called on to mediate between the town’s residents and the administration of Abū al-Hassūn al-Samlālī (d. 1070/1659), a ‘zāwiya-prince’ who governed Darʿa and the neighboring Sūs with an iron grip. Additionally, the degradation of Morocco’s religious institutions during the Maraboutic Crisis allowed deviant religious communities to spread, further eroding Islamic norms and practices across the country. The visible erosion of the religious principles that Ibn Nāṣir held dear surely moved him to seek a deeper level of certainty and spiritual fulfillment.

Ibn Nāṣir embarked on his spiritual journey under the supervision of ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Husayn al-Raqqī (d. 1045/1635), a Sufi shaykh who led a zāwiya in Tamgrūṭ, a

³ Ibn Nāṣir’s name was pronounced “Maḥammad” with an initial fatḥa, or short a vowel sound. This is a regional variation of the more common “Muḥammad”, with an initial dāamma, or short u vowel sound.
village in Wādī Darʿa close to Aghlān. al-Raqqī was an heir to the spiritual tradition of the 9th/15th century Sufi scholar Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493), the younger contemporary of al-Jazūlī. A witness to the politicization of al-Jazūlī’s teachings after his death, Zarrūq argued for an alternative approach to loving God through faithful obedience to the Qurʾan, Islamic law and the Prophetic sunna. While al-Jazūlī’s heirs dominated Morocco’s religious field during the Saʿdī dynasty and the early Maraboutic Crisis, Zarrūq’s tradition persevered along Morocco’s margins. al-Raqqī inherited Zarrūq’s path from the students of of Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī (d. 981-2/1574), a Sufi saint from Sijīlmāsa, a major Trans-Saharan trading post located to the north of Wādī Darʿa in the neighboring Tāfīlālt region. When Ibn Nāṣir inherited leadership of al-Raqqī’s zāwiya in 1055/1644, he proceeded to fully realize Zarrūq’s vision of a reverent love for God through his role as scholar, spiritual teacher and zāwiya leader.

Ibn Nāṣir’s teachings of love, fidelity and God-reverence (taqwā), along with his mastery of Islamic scholarship, made him 11th/17th century Morocco’s most sought after teacher. Tamgrūt became home to students from villages and cities across Morocco. His influence also spread across Muslim Africa and the Middle East. His two ʿhajj pilgrimages in 1080/1070 and 1086/1077 established the Nāṣiriyya’s regular ʿhajj caravan, which helped to revive the overland pilgrimage from Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula. Stewardship of the ʿhajj elevated Ibn Nāṣir’s status as a Muslim reviver (mujaddid). It also gave him and his students access to Muslim scholars in the Middle East. The chains of the transmission (sing. isnād) and manuscripts they acquired while on ʿhajj bolstered the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s position as a regional scholarly center, and formed the foundation of its extensive manuscript library. After his death in 1085/1674, Ibn
Nāsir’s third son, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa (d. 1129/1717), succeeded him. He faithfully
preserved his father’s teachings and mission and oversaw the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood’s
extensive growth and expansion. By his death, Nāṣirī branch communities existed
throughout Morocco’s cities and countryside, having spread along the overland hajj route
from Walāṭa, in the northwest Sahara, to the Holy city of Medina in the Arabian
Peninsula. More than mere affiliates, many of these communities supported their own
local Nāṣirī scholarly traditions, each of which developed and disseminated their
particular expressions of Ibn Nāṣir’s sunna-centric religious discourse.

While the Nāṣirīyya’s emergence was due in large part to Morocco’s particular
political and religious history, the brotherhood’s spread across Muslim Africa reveals
how its history is truly transregional in nature. A key factor in the Nāṣirīyya’s adoption
over such a wide geography was Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s revival
of the universal aspects of Islam’s discursive tradition: the study of hadīth, scrupulous
observation of the sunna, the hajj pilgrimage. Subsequently, their message appealed to
communities far outside of their native Wādī Darʿa. Along the overland hajj route in
North Africa, religious scholars embraced Nāṣirī discourse and institutions as an
alternative to the arbitrary regimes of authority enforced by pastoralist Arab tribes and
local Ottoman rulers. In the Sahara, the Nāṣirīyya provided key discursive resources to
scholars in the midst of constructing their region’s first self-sustaining scholarly tradition.
In the Middle East, the Nāṣirīyya formed close bonds with hadīth scholars at the cutting
edge of the region’s sunnī revival. These scholars recognized and praised the Nāṣirīyya
for their scrupulous adherence to the Prophetic sunna and keen regard for the science of
hadīth. In this way, the Nāṣirīyya represent one of the most important intellectual
currents in Muslim Africa and the Middle East during the late 11th/17th and early 12th/18th centuries. The movement of Nāṣirī scholars and texts across such a vast expanse demonstrates the potency and import of transregional scholarly networks in the Muslim world during this period. This history also raises important questions about the involvement of North African scholars in the sunnī revival and other intellectual movements in the Middle East during this period.

Approach and Method

So when she came it was said, “Is your throne like this?” She said, “It is as though it is the very one.” [Solomon Said], “And we were given the knowledge before her as we were in submission.” And she was hindered by that what she used to worship instead of Allah. She truly was from a people who disbelieved. It was said to her, “Enter the tower” but once she saw it, she thought it to be a wave of water and she uncovered her both legs. He said, “It indeed is a tower which has been paved smooth with crystal.” She said, “O My Lord! I indeed have wronged my own soul and I indeed have now submitted myself with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds.”

- The Qur’ān, Chapter of the Ant, 27:42-4

In the chapter of “The Thunder” (al-Ra‘d), the Qur’an states:

And in the earth are neighboring pieces of land and gardens of vines and crops and date trees, similar and dissimilar. They are all watered with one water but We do make some better in taste than others. In that indeed there are signs for a people who understand.5

This verse describes the relationship between God’s light, the human heart and human activity.6 God’s light is the “one water” which manifests itself to human beings through

4 Translation by Fode Drame. All succeeding translations of the Qur’an are from Fode Drame, unless otherwise noted.
5 Qur’an, 13:4.
6 We see this in a well-known hadīth in which the Prophet Muhammad describes the “guidance” and “light” that God sent with him to “an abundant rain.” He goes on to describe the different
revelation and signs throughout Creation. The heart is the “earth” that receives this water. Its response to Divine manifestation (tajallī) is what produces deeds (aʾmāl), which are represented by the fruit mentioned above. Like fruit, not all deeds are the same. The quality or “taste” of deeds vary by the degree of the actor’s acceptance of (taslīm) and response to (ṭāʾa or istijāba) God’s commandment. Full acceptance produces the most abundant and beneficial response, whereas rejection leads to more inferior results. These lessons offers valuable insight to the historian. The relationship between Divine light and the human heart suggests that history – or human activity – is a product of immaterial motives, principles or inspirations and the material contexts in which they appear. The study of history must then take actors’ beliefs and principles into account, along with their social and historical contexts, in order to produce the fullest picture of the past.

Since the modern study of Moroccan Sufism began in the later-19th and early 20th century, scholars have focused their attention largely on classifying the names, locations, rituals and structures of the numerous Sufi communities present in North Africa. These responses to this light in terms of types of bodies of water and produce. See Yaḥyā b. Sharaf al-Nawvvawī, Riyāḍ al-Ṣalīḥīn min Kalīm Sayyid al-Mursalīn, ed. Māhir Yā Sin al-Fahal (Damascus: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 2007), 371-2. This hadith is transmitted by both al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

7 This is a consistent theme through the Qurʾān. For example, the chapter of “The Heights”, states: “As for the good land, its produce comes out by the leave of its Lord and as for the one which is bad, it does not come out except meagrely. Thus do We present the signs in multiple forms for a people who offer gratitude,” (Qurʾān, 7:58). Also, a verse later in “The Thunder” states: “For those who answered their Lord is the excellent reward and as for those who did not answer Him, had they had for themselves all that is in the earth together and the like of it with it, they would surely pay it in ransom. It is they for whom there will be a woeful reckoning and their home will be the hell fire. What a woeful resting place,” (Qurʾān, 13:18).

Through primarily ethnographic research, these scholars argued that rural, zāwīya-based Sufism was a particularly Moroccan phenomenon produced by the transformation of urban, lettered Islamic spirituality by the country’s Berber populations.⁹ distilled the phenomenon of alliance with God (wilāya) into an ideal type of social markers and attributes. This ideal type became known as the marabout. Most commonly, the

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⁹ Montet describes the appearance of Sufi brotherhoods as a reaction against Islam’s “intellectualism”, which left commoners unsatisfied and feeling distant from God. Montet also attributes Moroccan Sufism’s popularity to the country’s ignorant population and their need to escape from oppression: “Mysticism is attractive to a population crushed by violence and arbitrarily political rule, such as the Moroccan people.” See “Les confréries religieuses,” 25-26 and 30-32. Bel elaborates on this theme, describing the history of Moroccan Sufism as mysticism’s migration from the learned city to the unlettered countryside. There, a previously ascetic tradition became enmeshed in local politics and tribalism and was manipulated to become a source of worldly power. Bel describes Moroccan Sufis’ role in the rise of the Sa’di Dynasty in the late 9th/15th century as the apogee of the country’s cultural history. He identifies baraka as a trace of the ‘fundamental religion’ of the Berbers, who were seen as a source of superstitious rituals and the fetishization of holy people. See discussion of Bel’s theories in Eickelman, *Moroccan Islam*, 24-5. Gellner continues with this theme by situating Moroccan Sufism within the more general scope of hierarchical, unlettered rural religious traditions. He contrasts these with the “egalitarian”, lettered traditions of urban spaces. See *Saints of the Atlas*, 7-9. More recently, Burke argues that the the act of defining Moroccan Islam as its own particular tradition and the focus on the “superstitious” aspects of Islam in Morocco, “provided an explanation of Moroccan backwardness, and hence its ‘colonizability’.” See *The Ethnographic State*, 176ff.
marabout was a rural Sufi leader who engaged in jihād, was a sharīf or recognized descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad, and commanded authority based on his baraka or “blessing”, which conveyed the power of their relationship with God. These ethnographers’ body of work, their analytical frameworks and conclusions, comprise the field of “Maraboutism.” Moroccan historian ʿAbd Allāh Najmī neatly summarizes the effect of Maraboutism’s influence on the study of Moroccan Sufism: “Generally speaking, intellectual history remains ignored within this historiography despite the importance of ideas and their practical role within the history Moroccan society. [This is also despite] the relative vitality of Sufi thought within Morocco, and that when consider alongside the vitality of of Moroccan thought more generally during the [modern period].”

10 Defining Sufi leaders as primarily sociopolitical actors allowed Maraboutism to further separate rural Moroccan Sufism from Islam’s scriptural and scholarly traditions. For example, Gellner describes how rural Sufis’ dependent relationship with tribal leaders necessarily compromised their interpretation of Islam law and the Qur’an, of which many were also ignorant: “The consequences of this situation are considerable for the kind of legal decisions which emanated from the saints. In theory, the saints’ judgments are supposed to be those of Koranic law, and indeed they derive their prestige, or are said to do so, from this fact. As the saints are descended from the Prophet it is locally assumed (or was), that of the very nature of things they would not make any decision other than a properly Koranic one: they are, after all, the Prophet’s flesh and blood. Koranic propriety emanates from their essence, as it were. Islam is what they do. They are Islam. […] The reality of the situation is of course quite different. The legal custom of the local tribes diverges from the Koran in a variety of ways. The tribesmen would find it inconvenient to have their issues judged in accordance within what in effect is an alien, urban code. When they come to the saints for judgment, what they want, or are prepared to accept, is a verdict which, apart from being in accordance with the real power relations of the situation, also fits in with their own preconceptions. If a saint in fact behaved like a learned urban Kadi and imposed the proper code upon them, he would soon lose his popularity and hence, in due course, his effective saintly status. He really has no choice but to give the tribesmen the kind of verdict they want. And, indeed, he has no desire to give them anything else, nor indeed the ability. He lacks the learning, indeed the literacy, which would enable him to give the proper Koranic verdict if he wanted to. Descent is no substitute for book learning.” See Saints of the Atlas, 148-9.

In the 1980s, scholars of Islam began to argue for the importance of ideas and discourse within the study of Muslim societies. In his work, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*, anthropologist Talal Asad responded to Maraboutism and structuralist approaches to the study of Islam with the concept of approaching Islam as a “discursive tradition.”\(^\text{12}\) Asad argues that it is best to study of Muslim societies with the understanding that variant expressions of Islam are not solely the result of Islam’s social construction within a particular context. Rather, Islam’s expressions in society results from a more fundamental interaction between Islam’s universal religious discourse – the scriptural traditions of the Qur’an and sunna – in addition to other source texts and the socio-political and cultural particularities of a given Muslim society.\(^\text{13}\) Echoing the Qur’anic verses cited above, Asad argues that Muslim communities and religious practices should be analyzed from the inside out – from discourse to social expressions – rather than from the outside in. In line with the Qur’an and with Asad, our study fully adopting the discursive tradition as its guiding framework. In this way, we view the Nāṣiriyya’s social history as an expression of its particular religious discourse, the discourse of reverent love.


\(^\text{13}\) Ovamir Anjum summarizes Asad’s contention as follows: “[W]hile one cannot analytically define a particularly Islamic religious experience (as Geertz attempts to do) or Islamic social structures (as Ernest Gellner…) one can speak of Islamic discursive constraints and tradition – precisely because one can speak of a set of well-defined and universally accepted foundational texts and interpretive techniques in Islam.” See Ovamir Anjum, “Islam as a Discursive Tradition: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27, no. 3 (2007): 659.
The Phenomenon of Wilāya

No study of Sufism can avoid engaging with the concept of *wilāya*, or alliance with God. As Fode Drame explains, *wilāya* describes a relationship of mutual assistance between God and His servants. The outline of this relationship is summarized by a well-known hadīth qudsī:

[God the Most High says:] “Whoever transgresses against one of my allies, I will declare war on them. My servant draws closer to me with nothing dearer to me than what I have made obligatory on him. My servant continues to draw closer to me by doing voluntary services till I love him, from then on I walk with him; I become his hearing by which he hears, his sight by which he sees, his hands by which he apprehends, his legs by which he walks. Whatever he asks of Me, I give to him, and if he seeks my assistance I will assist him.”

This hadīth identifies *wilāya* as being based on love. Initially, God does not love his servant but loves their good deeds and rewards them in kind. This is the level of *farāʾīd* or obligatory worship. Upon accomplishing this, the servant progresses through performing *nawāfiḍ* or voluntary acts of worship. At this level, God shifts from loving His servant’s deed to loving His servant in their self. This love establishes an intimacy between God and His servant that entitles them to His assistance in all of their affairs. It is also, at this point, that a servant attains *duʿāʾ mustajāb*, as God commits Himself to fulfilling whatever requests they ask of Him.

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15 al-Nawwawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, 52. Translation adapted from Drame, *The 99 Names*, 303. It is worth noting the parallelism between the text of this hadīth and Qur’an 7:194-6: “Truly those that you call besides Allah are slaves like unto you so call them and let them respond to you if you indeed are veridical. Do they have feet by which they walk or do they have hands by which they hold or do they have eyes by which they see or do they have ears by which they hear? Say, ‘Call your partners and then plan against Me and then do not give Me any respite.’ Indeed my ally is Allah who sent down the book and it is He who takes the righteous ones as allies.”
The obligatory and voluntary levels of worship describe the servant’s interaction with the two aspects of God’s light. These are the horizontal dimensions of God’s guidance (ḥūdā) and God’s knowledge (ʿilm).\(^{16}\) Elucidating the precise nature of these lights and their relationship to God’s essential Divine essence is beyond the scope of our discussion, and has been explained elsewhere.\(^{17}\) However, it is relevant to discuss how Islam’s scriptures describe God’s light, its distinct modes of expression and their ramifications.

*Sūrat al-Shuʿarāʾ* records an exchange between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh. When Moses comes to Pharaoh and announces his status as one of God’s Prophets, Pharaoh asks him to explain who God is. Moses states that God is, “The Lord of the heavens and of the earth and whatever is in between if you have certitude.”\(^{18}\) Pharaoh rejects Moses’ explanation, so he adds that God is, “The Lord of the east and of the west and what is between them if you truly understand.”\(^{19}\) Here, Moses is explaining that there are two dimensions to God’s dhāt. One is horizontal and encompasses the Creation (khalq), which is governed by time, or the movement of celestial bodies. This aspect of God’s being can be known through ratiocination or understanding (ʿaql).\(^{20}\) The horizontal dimension also relates to the light of guidance, as well as concepts like aggregation (jamʿ), mercy (raḥma), faith (īmān) and opening (fath).\(^{21}\) The second aspect of God’s being is vertical. This is the realm of God’s commandment (amr), which moves between

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\(^{16}\) See the story of Moses and the burning bush Qur’an 20:9-10 and 27:7-8.

\(^{17}\) For a detailed explanation of God’s light and its relationship to His dhāt, see Fode Drame, “Jawāhir al-Tawḥīd” (2018), Author’s Collection.

\(^{18}\) Qur’an 26:24.

\(^{19}\) Qur’an, 26:28.

\(^{20}\) For example, Qur’an 29:43 states: “And these are the parables which We set for the mankind and no one understands them except those who possess knowledge.”

\(^{21}\) These are all aspects of God’s Lordship (rubūbiyya). See Drame, “Jawāhir”.
the Heavens and the Earth. This realm is beyond measurement and calculation, and can only be known through certitude (yaqīn). The vertical dimension also relates to the light of knowledge, as well as concepts like segregation (tafriq or tafsīl), sight (baṣar) and the removal of veils (kashf). The journey to wilāya is comprised of the servant’s increasing interaction with and responding to differing manifestations of God’s light. A servant’s own knowledge and understanding of God serve as their means of perceiving these lights and understanding their quality and meaning. Sometimes they are required to respond to His magnificence and, at other times, to His supremacy. Learning how to respond properly is an essential aspect of Islamic devotion (ʿibāda). Those who complete this journey to attain God’s love and His alliance. Ideally, this produces an individual who perfectly embodies and reflects both of these lights. This is what the Qur’an refers to as the state of uprightness and balance (istiqāma). However, in lieu of a truly balanced istiqāma, a wali can display a more polarized perception of God’s light that favors either the light of magnificence or the light of supremacy. It is the variation in these perceptions that have produced so much creative tension within Islam’s religious field over the centuries.

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22 These are all aspects of God’s kingship (mālikīyya). See Drame, “Jawāhir”.
23 The Qur’an mentions seven characteristics that God loves in His servants. These are repentance (tawbā), purity (tahāra), reverence (taqwā), excellence (iḥsān), patience (ṣabr), uprightness (qīṣ) and trusting in God (tawakkul). For a detailed explanation of these characteristics and their attainment, see Fode Drame, “Kitāb Fadāʾil al-Akhlāq” (2016), Author’s Collection.
24 The Qur’an describes differences in perception of God’s light as being based on the direction of the servant’s journey to wilāya. Some of God’s allies begin by journeying through the vertical dimension and then proceed to the horizontal, whereas others begin through the horizontal dimension and end with the vertical. For examples of these see Qur’an 30:17-25, which describes the former, and Qur’an 13:1-4, which describes the latter.
Islamic studies scholars have long identified two trends within Islam’s discursive tradition. The first is the *sharīʿa*-oriented approach of many jurists and legally-minded scholars. This perspective emphasizes conformity to the outward meaning of the Qur’ān, *sunna* and Islamic law. The second is the *ḥaqīqa*-oriented approach adopted by many Sufis. This perspective prioritizes inward sincerity and attainment of esoteric truths, sometimes at the expense of conformity to the *sharīʿa*. With our understanding of *wilāya* in mind, we can understand the *sharīʿa* and *ḥaqīqa* as extensions of the light of God’s magnificence and supremacy, respectively. Furthermore, just as historians have noted the tension between supporters of *sharīʿa* and *ḥaqīqa* across Muslim history, so do the Qur’an and *sunna* indicate the inherent tension between these perspectives. The well-known Qur’anic story of the Prophet Moses and the Guide illustrates the conflict between the Moses’ horizontal perspective and that of the Guide who follows God’s commandment. Likewise, the Qur’an and the *ḥadīth* both describe God’s “highest company” (*al-malaʾ al-ʿalā*) as debating the relative merits of acts that raise ranks (*darajāt*), or *nawāfil* acts of worship, and those that expiate sins (*kaffārāt*), or *farāʿiḍ* acts of worship. We consider the Nāṣiriyya’s emergence as a product of this creative religious tension. Furthermore, we contend that Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s success had less to do with his social status or attributes, and more to do with his ability to restore balance.

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26 See Qur’an 18:60–82.

between the *sharī'a* and *ḥaqīqa* perspectives, which had grown increasingly polarized in 11th/17th century Morocco.

Our discursive approach allows us to revise existing conclusions about Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and his community. For the most part, Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāsiriyya have escaped North African historians’ and Islamic Studies scholars’ attention. While the Nāsiriyya was a rural Sufi brotherhood, they did not engage in *jihād* nor were they politically active. Nonetheless, the few extant studies of the Nāsiriyya strive to fit the brotherhood within the Maraboutic ideal type. Beginning with George Spillman’s treatment of the the brotherhood in his work *Esquisse d’histoire religieuse du Maroc*, historians have attributed Ibn Nāṣir’s success to his social attributes and context. This includes considering him a *sharīf*, describing him as possessing *baraka* and affiliating his community with the Jazūliyya brotherhood, the most popular Moroccan Sufi

28 Despite revisions of Maraboutism, contemporary studies of Moroccan Sufism continue to identify Sufi communities based on their sociopolitical roles and communal politics. This is largely due to the influence of Vincent J. Cornell’s work on the Jazūliyya brotherhood. Cornell’s *Realm of the Saint* is a classic work that uses primary Arabic language sources to debunk many of Maraboutism’s claims about the nature of Moroccan Sufism. However, Cornell reinforces Maraboutism’s claim that the Jazūliyya dominated Morocco’s religious field after the 10th/16th century. Furthermore, his theory of “socially conscious mysticism”, while grounded in Jazūli discourse, also reinforces Maraboutism’s view of Moroccan Sufis as primarily sociopolitical actors. Thus, Cornell has trouble identifying Ahmad Zarrūq, an urban, lettered Sufi, as an equal participant in Islamic spirituality alongside Muhammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī. See *Realm of the Saint*, 138 and 250-3. More recently, Scott Kugle argues that Maraboutism has led to an erasure of “Juridical Sufism”, that is, Islamic mysticism practices by lettered, predominately urban religious scholars who did not form large, *zāwiya*-based communities. See *Rebel Between Spirit and Law* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 38-40.


community during the early 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{31} However, these arguments are unsubstantiated by credible documentary sources.\textsuperscript{32} Moreover, the emphasis on the Nāsirīyya’s sociology has resulted in many scholars’ disregard for the brotherhood’s scholarly legacy\textsuperscript{33} and the longevity of its discourse’s influence.\textsuperscript{34} As a result, a large portion of the Nāsirīyya’s history in Morocco and across the Muslim world remains unexplored by the extant historiography. Perhaps, the greatest victim of this oversight is Aḥmad Zarrūq – Ibn Nāṣir’s spiritual ancestor – whose legacy in Moroccan Sufism has largely been erased.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{32} Early Nāṣirī sources make no claims to Ibn Nāṣir’s or his descendants status as shuraiḥ. Sharīfīan arguments are also entirely absent from Nāṣirī discourse. This changed in the 13\textsuperscript{th}/19\textsuperscript{th} century when Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī sought to revise extant Nāṣirī genealogies to show that Maḥammad b. Nāṣir was actually a shuraiḥ. Spillman, who echoes this argument, makes note of his collaboration with Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī’s descendants to produce his study of the Nāṣirīyya. See Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, *Ṭalʿ at al-Mushtarī fī-l-Nasab al-Jaʃarī* (Sale, Morocco: al-Muṣassāṣa al-Nāṣirīyya lil-Thaqāfa wa-l-ʿIlm, 1987); Spillman, *Esquisse*, 185. Gutelius is one of the only Western scholars to acknowledge that Ibn Nāṣir did not claim Sharīfīan descent. See David Gutelius, “The Path Is Easy and the Benefits Large: The Nasirīyya, Social Networks and Economic Change in Morocco, 1640-1830,” *Journal of African History* 43 (2002): 28.

\textsuperscript{33} Gutelius writes that the Nāṣirīyya, “did not, for the most part, produce lasting scholarly legacies.” He goes on to say that Nāṣirī scholarship is nonetheless meaningful for its role in promoting social change. See “Sufi Networks and Social Contexts”, 15.

\textsuperscript{34} In her study of the Western Sahara, Lydon describes the Nāṣirīyya as a “short-lived but noteworthy Sufi movement.” See Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 96.

\textsuperscript{35} Zarrūq’s disappearance from the historiography of North African Sufism begins with Depont and Coppolani who describe him as a leading spiritual and scholarly figure whose legacy was greatly diminished by his failure to establish a sustained, eponymous Sufi community. They write: “Despite [Zarrūq’s] spiritual renown and his great learning, the brotherhood that he
Methodology and Sources

A. The isnād Paradigm as Historical Method

established under his leadership was never more than a nascent organization; his doctrines remained confined to the domain of the literate. They were never able to descend into the unlearned masses, who retained only a vague memory of their author.” See Depont and Coppolani, *Les confréries religieuses musulmane*, 458-9. This assessment of Zarrūq continued throughout the Colonial period. See G. S. Colin, “Sayyidāt Ahmad Zarrūq: Un Saint Marocain Enterré En Tripolitaine,” *Rivista Della Tripolitania* 2, no. 1 (June 1925): 23–34. Libyan historian Ali Khushaim brought these conclusions into the post-colonial period. He cites Colin to support his argument that Zarrūq’s legacy was limited to educated elites: “[Zarrūq's] vast knowledge and aware understanding of Sufism’s spirit, and his truthful message, are what made his writings far-fetched, and the general populace was not able to grasp them despite his effort to simplify his teachings and make Sufism’s concepts more easy to understand, generally speaking. An enlightened [Sufi path] like the Zarrūquiyya had no opportunity, in those dark days of Islamic history, to preserve its purity and integrity of its essence. It’s possible that the [Zarrūquiyya] existed as a brotherhood of elites, however the general populace [that followed Zarrūq] established other paths that accorded with their biases and prejudices (*tattāfiq muiyūlim wa ahwā’i’him*) as well as their levels of mental and spiritual comprehension...” See ‘Ali Fahmī Khushaim, *Ahmad Zarrūq wa-l-Zarrūquiyya: Dirāsāt Hayāh wa-Fikr wa-Madhhab wa-Ṭariqa*, 3rd ed. (Dār al-Madād al-Islāmī, 2002), 172-3. In the most recent study of Zarrūq, Scott Kugle argues that Zarrūq’s teachings, “lay dormant in writing until, in the contemporary period, Muslim scholars and leaders have begun to revive them.” See *Rebel Between Spirit and Law* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 8-9. Kugle focuses particularly on the career of American Muslim scholar Hamza Yusuf, whom he identifies as a chief reviver of Zarrūq discourse. See also Scott Kugle, “Zarrūq, Ahmad,” in *Encyclopedia of Islam. THREE*, ed. Kate Fleet et al., accessed November 24, 2019, http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.princeton.edu/10.1163/1573–3912.ei3.COM.24033. An exception to this trend are studies of Moroccan Sufism by Moroccan historians. Going back to the mid-11th/17th century Moroccan scholars have recognized Zarrūq alongside Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī’s as Moroccan Shadhilī Sufism’s two founders. See our discussion in Chapter 1. Contemporary Arabic-language studies have largely preserved this legacy. For instance, Ahmad Tawfīq cites the Jazūliyya and Zarrūqiyya spiritual lineages as the foundations of modern Shadhilī Sufism in Morocco. See “Taṣawwuf,” in *Ma’lamat al-Maghrib* (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi’ Salā, 2014), v. 7, 2391-6. ‘Abd Allāh al-Murābiḥ al-Targhī identifies Zarrūq as the Nāṣiriyya’s primary spiritual ancestor and influence. He also argues against the brotherhood’s association with the Jazūliyya based on differences in their practices and spiritual approach. See “al-Taṛīqa al-Nāṣiriyya: Maẓhār min Maẓāhir al-Shadhiliyya,” *al-Dawḥa* 3, no. 3 (1998 1997): 55–68. Ahmad ʿAmālik presents Zarrūq alongside al-Jazūlī as the chief sources of Ibn Nāṣir’s spiritual inspiration. See *Jawāniḥ min Ta’rīkh al-Zāwïya al-Nāṣiriyya*, 3 vols. (Rabat, Morocco: Wizārat al-Awqāf wa al-Shuʿūn al-Islāmiyya, 2006). Lastly, ʿAbd Allāh Najmī successfully defines Zarrūq as a pivotal figure in Moroccan Ṣūfī history whose influence has abided into the 20th century. See *al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid’a bi-l-Maghrib*, which explains the relationship between Zarrūq’s Sufism and that of his chief successor, Ahmad b. Yūsuf al-Rāshīdī. See also our discussion in Chapter 1. Najmī goes as far as to describe the Nāṣiriyya as the chief heirs to Zarrūq’s spiritual tradition, despite the temporal distance between him and Ibn Nāṣir. See “al-Zarrūqiyya,” in *Ma’lamat al-Maghrib* (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi’ Salā, 2001), v. 14, 4631-4.
We’ve attempted to study the Nāṣiriyya’s history in close accordance to their own terms. In addition to adopting the Islam’s discursive tradition as our approach, we’ve chosen to reconstruct the Nāṣiri community according to the isnād paradigm, the set of epistemic codes that governed the transmission of spiritual and textual knowledge in the Pre-Modern Muslim world. The isnād or “chain of transmission” documented the series of interpersonal interactions by which any piece of knowledge – a book, a report, a spiritual insight – was transmitted from one generation to another. The isnād paradigm is most pronounced in the field of Prophetic traditions (hadith) where the reliability of a given hadīth depends on the authority of the individuals who have transmitted it over time and the nature of their interactions with one another. In a more general sense, the idea of learning through direct interactions with a recognized, authoritative teacher defined the culture of learning within Islamic scholarship and spirituality. Learning through independent reading was not well-regarded, especially among hadīth scholars. In the spiritual realm, learning from books over training with a spiritual guide was considered perilous.³⁶

The isnād paradigm allows us to investigate the Nāṣiriyya’s discursive tradition through its social networks. This satisfies Asad’s proposition that Islamic discourse is intertwined with social institutions. In fact, Islam considers knowledge to reside with people’s hearts.³⁷ To trace the transmission of a text, or the history of an idea in an Islamic context, requires us to consider the social networks that allowed that piece of knowledge to travel across time and space. In this way, our study defines the Nāṣirī

³⁷ Qur’an, 29:49 states, “Nay, it is clear signs in the bosoms of those who are given the knowledge and none denies Our signs except those who wrong their own souls.”
community as the network of scholarly and spiritual lineages that connect back to Maḥammad b. Nāṣir, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, or their students. These genealogies are documented in multiple sources: biographical dictionaries, academic repertoires (sing. *fahrasa*), academic certificates (sing. *ijāza*), travelogues, and correspondence. Because it is possible for someone to have studied with Ibn Nāṣir and others without seeking to enter the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood, we only consider those individuals whose induction into the Nāṣirīyya is explicitly stated and documented to be affiliated with the brotherhood.38

An additional factor in defining affiliation to the Nāṣirīyya is an individual’s fidelity to Ibn Nāṣir’s religious discourse. There are examples of people who considered themselves part of the Nāṣirī order who did not practice Sufism according to Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s teachings. We also have records of those who transmitted the Nāṣirīyya’s discursive tradition without having a known affiliation to the brotherhood. We consider the former to be affiliated with the Nāṣirīyya due to their genealogical relationship to Ibn Nāṣir. We consider the latter to have been influenced by Nāṣirī discourse and practices, but to not be affiliated with the brotherhood.

Furthermore, defining the Nāṣirī community through its *isnād* networks allows us to study the brotherhood’s spread and influence beyond the confines of its main *zāwiya* in Tamgrūt. In other words, the *isnād* paradigm allows us to study the Nāṣirīyya as a transregional rather than particularly Moroccan community.39 In fact, Muslim scholars

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38 An example of such evidence is someone’s inclusion among the *ahl al-maḥlabba* or “community of love.” Examples of this term and its usage are discussed in Chapters 2 and 4.

viewed travel as essential to maintaining the human chain of knowledge transmission across time and space.\(^{40}\) Mālik b. Anas, the eponym of the Mālikī school of law, is known to have stated, “Knowledge is approached, it does not come to you.”\(^{41}\) Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī affirmed Mālik’s sentiment in his magnum opus Ḳiyā’ ’Ulūm al-Dīn, when he wrote: “All worthwhile knowledge that has been acquired from the time of the Prophet’s Companions until our current age was only acquired through travel and by the traveler who sought it.”\(^{42}\) Further description of mobility’s utmost importance to the production and transmission of knowledge within pre-Modern Muslim societies can be found in a letter written by ’Abd al-Qādir al-Baghḍādī, a 7\(^{th}/13\(^{th}\) century Egyptian historian, advising one of his students:

> Know, too, that the sciences seep away, then spring forth for a time, like vegetation or water springs; they shift from people to people, and from country to country […] He who has not sweated his brow going to the doors of the learned, will not strike roots in excellence. He who has not been put to shame by the learned, will not be treated with deference by the people; and he who has not been censured by the learned, will not prevail. He who has not endured the stress of study, will not taste the joy of knowledge. He who does not toil, will not prosper.\(^{43}\)

On this basis, our study strives to capture the mobility inherent to the Nāṣirīyya’s growth, development and historical legacy. To this end, we’ve tried as much as possible to let the movements of Nāṣīrī scholars and texts determine our study’s geographic scope without circumscribing this movement within preexisting area studies frameworks.

\(^{40}\) Euben writes: “travel in pursuit of knowledge is more than merely a recurrent theme in Islam or an occasional practice of Muslims. It is, rather, an ethos.” See Roxanne Leslie Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore Muslim and Western Travelers in Search of Knowledge* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 38.


B. Nāṣirī Source Materials

The Nāṣirī discursive tradition comprises the religious teachings by which Maḥammad b. Nāṣir defined his spiritual path. These teachings comprise the lens through which Ibn Nāṣir viewed himself, his community and their relationship with Moroccan and broader North African society. The Nāṣirī discursive tradition’s sources are many. Ibn Nāṣir is remembered as a prolific teacher, but he did not compose many written works. Nonetheless, his students preserved a number of his works, which serve as the nucleus of our study. In order to best reconstruct the Nāṣiriyya’s religious discourse, we’ve chosen to rely heavily on primary, Arabic-language sources dating from the late-11th/17th and early-12th/18th centuries.

Ibn Nāṣir’s most important scholarly work is The Nāṣirī Responsa (al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣiriyya).44 The Ajwiba is a compilation of his oral responses to petitioners on a variety of subjects put together by his student Muḥammad b. Abī Qāsim al-Ṣanhājī. More than a legal work, the Ajwiba records Ibn Nāṣir’s opinions on a wide range of religious matters. They also include a small collection of Ibn Nāṣir’s epistles along with several letters by Aḥmad Zarrūq. These contents convey a clear picture of Ibn Nāṣir’s religious discourse and his view of his and his community’s position within Moroccan society. Additional information about Ibn Nāṣir and the first generation of Nāṣirī scholars can be found in al-Durar al-Murassa’a, a biographical dictionary composed by Muḥammad al-Makkī al-

Nāṣirī in the first half of the 12th/18th century.\(^4^5\) al-Nāṣirī synthesizes a number of earlier biographical works by Nāṣirī and other Moroccan scholars, as well as biographical works from the Middle East and oral traditions transmitted through Ibn Nāṣir’s descendants. As a result, \textit{al-Durar}'s treatments of its subjects is quite comprehensive but is limited by its narrow geographic focus. With some exceptions, al-Nāṣirī limits his study to scholars and notables who were either born or resided in the Darʿa Valley. Other biographical sources include \textit{al-Durra al-Jalīla} by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Khalīfa (d.c. 1203/1786), a second Nāṣirī-focused biographical dictionary that was completed in the 1200s/1780s.\(^4^6\) al-Khalīfa, does not limit himself to a particular geographical area, rather he seeks to study Ibn Nāṣir’s descendants and particularly the life and students of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa.

In addition to these works, our study also engages heavily with academic repertoires, epistles and travelogues as primary source records of individual Nāṣirī scholars’ and adepts’ experiences. We touched on our use of the \textit{ijāza} and academic biography in the previous section. With regard to epistles, a major source of Nāṣirī correspondence is an untitled collection of epistles that we refer to as the “Nāṣirī Letters.” This collection comprises 455 pieces of correspondence by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī, which were collected and transcribed by a certain ‘Abd al-Kābir al-Nāṣirī in the 12th/18th century.\(^4^7\) Evidence from the letters’ content suggest their compilation occurred sometime in the 1140s/1730s, approximately a decade after Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s death. We acquired a copy of this collection from

Moroccan historian Aḥmad ʿAmālik while performing fieldwork in Morocco in December 2016. Dr. ʿAmālik originally acquired a copy of these letters from a private manuscript collection during his research on the Nāṣirīya in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite the lack of details regarding this collection’s origins, Dr. ʿAmālik has authenticated them and cites them in his own research. To further authenticate these letters, we’ve cross-referenced those written by al-Ḥasan al-Yūṣī with alternate copies published in the collection Rasāʾil al-Yūṣī. The Nāṣirī Letters are a rich and detailed source of the interactions between Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and his adepts across Morocco. Their contents form the basis of the detailed exploration of the Nāṣirī community’s composition and structure in Chapter 2.

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A scan of the author’s photocopy of the opening folios of the Nāṣirī Letters with the author’s and Dr. ʿAmālik’s annotations.

The last major group of sources that we engage with are travelogues, known as riḥla or journey narratives. It appears that the Nāṣirī revival of the overland ḥajj pilgrimage stimulated a revival of this literary genre which had flourished during the Marānīd period, but became less common in subsequent centuries. In the 11th/17th century, Nāṣirī travelogues stimulated a revival of this genre. Our study focuses on Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s travelogue al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya and two travelogues by Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, a student of Muḥammad b. Nāṣir.⁴⁹ These texts provide several layers of

historical data. First, they offer a minute record of day-to-day life on the *hājj* pilgrimage trail. They explain market conditions, weather, water and safety conditions on the caravan route, and interactions with local populations. On a broader scale, they also provide precise information about the Nāṣirīyya’s transregional expansion during the 12th/18th century. Lastly, these texts are important resources for the intellectual history of the overland *hājj* pilgrimage. al-Khalīfa’s and al-Hashtūkī’s contain detailed depictions of their authors and colleagues studying, teaching, holding debates and acquiring books through the duration of their pilgrimage journey. We use sources like these to reconstruct the history of the Nāṣirī *hājj* caravan in Chapter 4.

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Chapter 1

The Nāṣirīyya’s Historical and Discursive Context

Say, “If you indeed love Allah, then follow me. Allah will love you and will forgive you your sins and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, All-merciful.”
- Qur’an, 3:31.

Introduction

This chapter argues that the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood is best understood as a revival of Aḥmad Zarrūq’s (d. 899/1493) spirituality of reverent love. This chapter traces the relationship between Zarrūq and Maḥammad b. Nāṣir (d. 1085/1674), the Nāṣirīyya’s first shaykh, through the history of Moroccan Sufism between the late 9th/15th and 11th/17th centuries. It begins by discussing the history of Wādī Darʿa, a region along Morocco’s Southeastern pre-Saharan where Ibn Nāṣir was born and raised. It then proceeds to explore the competing legacies of Aḥmad Zarrūq and his elder contemporary Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī (d.c. 870/1466). al-Jazūlī is credited as being the father of “socially conscious mysticism” in Morocco. With the rise of the Saʿdī Dynasty in the 10th/16th century, the Jazūliyya enjoyed a period of dominance over Morocco’s religious field. Nonetheless, we show how Zarrūq’s tradition remained vital, despite its marginalization. The collapse of the Saʿdī regime in the early 11th/17th century plunged Morocco into decades of anarchy and civil war known as the “Maraboutic Crisis.” We argue that Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s success during this tumultuous period is best understood through his revival of Zarrūq’s spirituality of reverent love. This discourse helped Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣirīyya preserve their independence during the Maraboutic Crisis and
under the new 'Alawī Dynasty. It also offered an alternative approach to loving God, which appealed to many Moroccans, both elites and the general public, who sought an alternative to the Jazūliyya brotherhood.

*An Outline of Wādī Dar‘a’s Social and Religious History*

**Figure 1.1 Historic Wādī Dar‘a**

Wādī Dar‘a’s position within modern-day Morocco’s territorial borders. The blue line represents the river’s northern branch, which begins at Agdez – point “A” – and ends at al-Mḥāmīd – point “B”. Tamgrūt, where the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya is located, is marked by the star symbol.1

Wādī Dar‘a is the name for the northern portion of the Dar‘a River valley. It consists of six interconnected oases located along Morocco’s southeastern, pre-Saharan frontier. These oases begin in the town of Agdez, about 38 miles to the Southeast of modern-day Warzazāt, and continue for another 118 miles until al-Mḥāmīd, a small

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1 Map generated by the Author.
settlement on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Here, the Dar’a River takes a turn to the West. It continues to run to the Southwest for several hundred miles until meeting the Atlantic Ocean north of Ṭān-Ṭān. The Dar’a River forms a natural barrier between the Sahara Desert and the pre-Saharan Sūs plains. Historic Wāḍī Dar’a was a major intersection of transregional commerce and transhumance in the Pre-Modern period. It is the middle point between the trading ports on the Sūs’s Atlantic coast and Sijilmāsa, the major caravan trading center located in the Tāfilālt, to Dar’a’s northeast. Dar’a also served as an essential avenue for the transport of goods and people to and from Morocco’s interior – the Gharb – and the commercial and population centers of the greater Sahara and Sahel, such as Timbuktu.

Beginning in the pre-Islamic period, the transregional movement of peoples helped Wāḍī Dar’a develop an ethnically diverse social base. Wāḍī Dar’a was not only strategically located, its river’s banks provided fertile land for sedentary agriculture, especially around its palm oases, and the surrounding plains gave ample room for herding. al-Būzaydī writes that Dar’a’s earliest settlers were Africans from the Sahel and members of the Zanāta Berber tribe, the main tributary of the Saharan Ṣanhāja Berber tribe. This included a significant Jewish population that settled in Dar’a’s southern 

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2 Aḥmad al-Būzaydī, “Dar’a (Nahr wa Maḏīna wa Ӏqlīm),” in Ma’lamat al-Maghrib (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi Salā, 2000), v. 12, 3992-4003.
5 al-Būzaydī theorizes that the Zanāta first settled Dar’a after being pushed southward by Roman expansion in North Africa in the early centuries C.E. This pushed their relatives, the Ṣanhāja, into the Sahara. See al-Būzaydī, 39ff.
After the arrival of Islam in the 2nd/8th century, the Zanāta converted to Kharijism and established the Şufriyya Emirate in Sijilmāsa. This polity came to annex Darʿa. In the 5th/11th century, the rise of the Almoravid (al-murābitūn) movement saw the return of the Şanhāja to Southeastern Morocco. The Almoravids used Darʿa as a strategic link between their territories in the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara. This new Şanhāja presence led the Zanāta to abandon their pastoralism in favor of sedentary agriculture, which contributed to an economic fluorescence in Darʿa during this period.

The emergence of the Maṣmūda Berber Almohad (al-muwahhidūn) dynasty in the 6th/12th century saw the arrival of the Arab Banū Maʿqil tribe in Southeastern Morocco, the region’s first significant Arab population. al-Būzaydī writes that the Almohads settled the Banū Maʿqil along the Saharan frontier as a rear guard against the Almoravids’ Şanhāja allies in the Sahara. The Banū Maʿqil and the Zanāta, the Şanhāja’s competitors, became natural allies. When the Zanāta Banū Marin clan launched its own campaign against the Almohad dynasty in the 7th/13th century, the Banū Maʿqil proceeded South, clearing out the remaining Şanhāja-Almoravid elements from the Tāfilalt and Darʿa. The Şanhāja retreated into the Atlas Mountains to the West and deeper South into the Sahara. This opened trade routes between Darʿa and the Sūs for the first time. By the end of the 7th/13th century, the Banū Maʿqil controlled all the major oases in the Tāfilalt, Darʿa and the Sūs. Trade in these regions flourished. However, the Banū Maʿqil proved

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6 al-Būzaydī, 45.
7 al-Būzaydī, 42-3.
8 al-Būzaydī, 43-44.
9 al-Būzaydī, 49-50.
10 al-Būzaydī, 51-2.
11 al-Būzaydī, 52.
12 al-Būzaydī, 52.
themselves quite hostile to Marīnid rule. By the second half of the 8th/14th century, when Marīnid power began to wane, the Awlād Ḫusayn, a Banū Maʿqil clan, asserted themselves as Darʾa’s rulers. Their harsh rule, characterized by constant raiding and extra-legal taxation, led to economic decline and the resumption of pastoralism by many previously sedentary groups. This crisis continued until the 9th/15th century when the Awlād Ḫusayn adopted a sedentary lifestyle and helped revive Darʾa’s agricultural and trading economy. No longer itinerant tribesmen, the Banū Maʿqil clans established themselves in fortified towns (qusūr). However, their sedentarization did not bring an end to raiding in the valley. New pastoralist groups, namely the Berber Ayt ʿĀṭā, continued to target Darʾa’s rich agricultural communities. The Banū Maʿqil communities in the qusūr were better organized than their neighbors and therefore better able to defend themselves against these raiders. In the absence of Sultanic rule, these communities both competed against and cooperated with one another to provide security from the rest of the valley during the 9th/15th and early 10th/16th centuries.

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13 al-Ḥūzaydhī writes that Marīnid Sultans Yaʿqūb b. ʿAbd al-Ḥaq (r. 668-685/1269-1286) and Abū Yaʿqūb Yūṣuf (r. 685-706/1286-1306) led violent, punitive campaigns in 1270/669 and 1278/676 against the Awlād Ḫusayn clan of the Banū Maʿqil that threatened sedentary populations and caravan traffic in Darʾa. In the 8th/14th century, the Awlād Ḫusayn began supporting rebels against the Marīnid Sultans and succeeded in removing several Marīnid governors from the region. This situation changed temporarily under Sultan Abū ʿInān (r. 749-759/1348-1358), whose governor succeeded in pacifying the Awlād Ḫusayn by granting them rights to collect taxes from Darʾa’s sedentary populations. However, this peace was shortlived. See al-Ḥūzaydhī: 53-6.
14 al-Ḥūzaydhī, 57-8.
16 al-Ḥūzaydhī, 60-6.
Despite this long history of human settlement, there is little record of religious life in Darʿa prior to the Almoravid period. The medieval historian Ibn Abī Zarʿ (d.c. 720/1320) reported that religious scholars in Darʿa and Sijilmāsa invited ʿAbd Allāh b. Yasīn (d. 451/1059), the founder of the Almoravid dynasty, to occupy their territory in the 5\(^{th}\)/11\(^{th}\) century.\(^{17}\) These reports suggest the presence of a sunnī-oriented population in Darʿa that opposed the Khārijism of the Zanātā Berbers in Sijilmāsa. After the Almoravids’ arrival, Darʿa’s scholars likely adopted the Mālikī school of law. We also find the earliest references to Sufism in Darʿa during this period. al-Tādli’s (d. 627/1231) Kitāb al-Tashawwuf contains several references to Sufi figures from Darʿa.\(^{18}\) These include Šāliḥ b. Mālīl al-Jarāwī, a pious scholar who moved to Darʿa from Tādlā in the Middle Atlas. He was killed by tribesmen in a place called Tāzāgārt in 540/1145.\(^{19}\) ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Wālī al-Ṣāliḥ (d.c. 6\(^{th}\)/11\(^{th}\) century) was purported to have been a companion of ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166).\(^{20}\) Sulaymān b. ʿAbd al-Bārī al-Darī (d. 605/1210) was another pious man who was remembered for having entered the Darʿa valley in the midst of a powerful flood.\(^{21}\) ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Darī (d. 608/1213) was famous for fasting every day of the week except Friday and for entering powerful

\(^{17}\) A century or so later, Yaqūt al-Ḥamawī recorded mention of Darʿa’s religious scholars in his encyclopedic Muʾjam al-Buldān. See al-Manūnī, “Ḥaḍārat”, 9-10.


spiritual states (*ahwāl*).

These few references depict Sufism in Dar’a during the Almoravid and Almohad periods as limited to pious individuals. The conflict between sedentary and pastoral groups seems to have defined these men’s lives with many of them facing persecution and death at the hands of rogue tribesmen. The absence of reference to Sufi communities, other than 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Wālī al-Ṣāliḥ’s purported affiliation with the Qādiriyya brotherhood, coheres with the development of Sufism across Morocco. It’s not until the late Almohad period that ʿAbū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ (d. 631/1234) is credited with establishing Morocco’s first significant Sufi community – the ‘Pilgrims’ brotherood’ (*ṭāʾifat al-ḥuǧjā*) – in Asafī, a port on Morocco’s Atlantic coast. While his brotherhood established a lodge (*zāwiya*) in Dar’a at some point in the 7th/13th century, there is no record of Ṣāliḥ’s community, or any other Sufi community, having a notable presence within Dar’a during the Marīnid period. This changed in the 10th/16th century with the

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24 Beginning with the teachings of Abū Madyan (d. 595/1198), generations of Moroccan Sufis had practiced “socially conscious mysticism” aimed at improving the conditions of their fellow Muslims. See Vincent J. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint: Power and Authority in Moroccan Sufism* (University of Texas Press, 2010), 138.

25 We treat Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ’s career in Chapter Four.

26 It’s not entirely clear why communal Sufism failed to develop in Wādī Darʾa during the Marīnid period. It may be due to the mediating influence of the Arab tribal *qusūr* whose presence may have mitigated the social need for Sufi lodges in the valley. We discuss the Sufi lodge (*zāwiya*) as a social institution in more detail in Chapter 2. The relationship between segmentary societies and the appearance of socially-active Sufi saints was first posited by Ernest Gellner. Gellner applied anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard’s theory of segmentary lineage societies to his study of the role of saints among the Ahansal Berber tribe of Morocco’s High Atlas Mountains. Here, Gellner argues that constant and balanced conflict between Morocco’s Sultanic government (*makhzen*) and ungoverned rural tribes (*siba*) encouraged the emergence of neutral
emergence of the Saʿdī family as the political leaders of Darʿa and Southern Morocco. An Arab clan based out of the qaṣr of Tāgmādārt, the Saʿdī’s stood apart from their fellow Banū Maʿqil through their recognized status as shurafāʾ and their embrace of the Jazūliyya Sufi brotherhood. Their rise strengthened the Jazūlī presence in Darʿa and led to the establishment of the valley’s first Sufi lodges.

**Moroccan Sufi Currents during the Marīnid and Saʿdī Dynasties**

The transition from Almohad to Marīnid rule in the late 7th/13th century initiated a concomitant shift in the orientation of Morocco’s religious field. The Almohads grounded their power in the religious ideology of their founder Ibn Tūmart (d. d. 524/1130). This discourse was at odds with Morocco’s prevalent sunnī, Mālikī orientation, which had developed under the preceding Almoravid dynasty. When the Marīnīds defeated the Almohads in 663/1266, they lacked an inherent religious legitimacy. As Zanāta berbers, they could not claim shurafāʾ status. Nor were they affiliated with any particular religious ideology. Rather, the Marīnīds constructed their authority through their alliances with the country’s social, economic and religious elites. In particular, the Marīnīd Sultans used social mediators who could arbitrate and maintain truces necessary for social survival. Charles and Elizabeth Stewart apply Gellner’s arguments in their study of social structure and Islam in pre-modern Mauritania. They argue that saints succeeded as social mediators due to their allegiance to Islam rather than ethnic or tribal groups. See Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969) and Charles Stewart and Elizabeth Kirk Stewart, *Islam and Social Order in Mauritania: A Case Study from the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973).

royal patronage to support the revival of *sunnī*, Mālikī discourse, which had suffered from neglect and persecution under the preceding Almohads. Early Marīnid rulers helped expand the country’s religious education system through the construction of numerous royal-sponsored religious colleges (*madāris*) and Sufi lodges (*zawāyā*). These centers gave Morocco’s *sunnī*, Mālikī religious scholars, the space and resources to reestablish the Mālikī school of law as the primary discursive frame of reference within Morocco’s religious field. This was accomplished through the publication of numerous concise teaching manuals (*mukhtāṣarāt*) that standardized the teaching of Mālikī legal methodology (*usūl al-fiqh*) across the country. As Cornell writes, the Marīnid-Mālikī alliance was so successful that the principles of Mālikī *usūl al-fiqh* came to influence a wide range of academic disciplines including literature, language arts and history. Furthermore, these discursive conditions encouraged the spread of *sharīʿa*-oriented Sufism which flourished in Marīnid-era Sufi lodges. This increasingly horizontal religious environment succeeded in stifling any remaining Almohad-esque religious movements. Likewise, scholars and Sufis from the religious establishment clashed with

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outsiders, many of whom embodied vertically-oriented spiritual approaches throughout this period.\(^{31}\)

We can find evidence of the interaction between this discursive current in *al-Mabāḥith al-ʿAṣliyya*, an influential didactic poem authored by the Sufi scholar, Ibn al-Bannāʾ al-Saraqusṭī (d.c. 8\(^{th}/14\(^{th}\) century).\(^{32}\) Written in the middle Marīnid period, al-Saraqusṭī authored *al-Mabāḥith* to provide a concise and comprehensive explanation of Islamic spirituality’s core tenets and practices. He opens *al-Mabāḥith* by tracing Sufism’s origins to the *ahl al-Ṣuffa*, the companions of the Prophet Muḥammad who lived in the veranda of his mosque in Medina:

> The archetypes of the Sufis are the people of *ahl al-Ṣuffa* /  
> In the time of the Messenger – so recognize its description

> They were the guests of Allāh and Islam /  
> And they were the people who sat with the leader of Mankind

> They used to work on being unattached [to worldly life] /  
> And they turned away completely from anything other than the All-Merciful

> They took the character of the Prophet /  
> [and] they invoked God morning and evening

> They have understood the spirit of the Law /  
> And they placed unity ahead of differentiation

> They have left for the sake of Allāh all that they earned /


\(^{32}\) Little is known about al-Saraqusṭī’s biography other than his presence in Fez roughly contemporary to the 8\(^{th}/14\(^{th}\) historian Ibn Abī Zar’. Beginning in the late 9\(^{th}/15\(^{th}\) century, *al-Mabāḥith* enjoyed a celebrated status within Moroccan Sufi discourse. In total, seven commentaries on *al-Mabāḥith* are extant. The earliest is Zarrūq’s, dating to the 880s/1480s, and the most recent was by Ibn ṬAjīb (d. 1224/1809), a well-known Darqawī Shādhilī scholar whose writing influenced Moroccan Sufism in the 13\(^{th}/19\(^{th}\) century. See Aḥmad Zarrūq al-Fāsī, *al-Lawwāʾīḥ al-Fāṣiyya fi Sharḥ al-Mabāḥith al-ʿAṣliyya al-lāl Jumlat al-Tariqa al-Ṣūfīyya*, ed. Muḥammad Ṭabd al-Qādir Naṣṣār and Ṭabd Allāh Jamāl Ḥāmadān Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Īhāsān, 2010), 7-8 and 10-11.
Every Sufi traces their lineage back to them

Therefore, the affair of Sufism is not new /
Nay, [Sufism] once flourished and now we find it withered and dry

Therefore, enter the path of the People, [and] you will find its good fortune /
Since this path is bound by God’s Book and the *sunna*[^33]

al-Saraqušṭī describes the essence of Sufism as detachment from worldly life (*tajrīd*) and turning sincerely towards God (*ināba*). He states that the Sufi should strive to acquire the Prophet Muhammad’s character traits and rely on God for assistance. Lastly, he affirms that the Sufi path, as outlined by the *ahl al-Ṣuffā*, is bound by the Qur’an and *sunna*.

al-Saraqušṭī’s assertion that Sufism is rooted in following the Prophetic *sunna*, the Qur’an and the acquisition of Prophetic characteristics seem to align with the orientation of the Marīnid-Mālikī religious establishment. However, later in *al-Mabāḥith*, he acknowledges that there are two equally valid paths for spiritual seekers to follow. The first of these, the path *ishrāq*, involves the seeker’s immersion in remembrance of God (*dhikr*) in order to purify their soul (*nafs*):

[The people of *tašawwu*] fall into two groups /
and their instructions regarding the path are of two kinds

Some of them say that the soul (*nafs*) is like a mirror /
And that the past and the future are reflected in it

Yet, there are matters that obstruct it /
And cause it to be unaligned and unpolished

They also say that springwater could sink into the ground /
And that the only way to bring it out again is to dig

This group has agreed that treating the root of the problem / 
Is closer to healing and attainment as well

What we are referring to here / 
Is treating and cleansing the soul (nafs)

This is the path of illumination (ishrāq) / 
It was and will remain as long as existence continues to exist

The second path, clear proof (burhān), involves seeking religious knowledge prior to 
embarking on spiritual purification. al-Saraqusṭī writes:

The other group states that knowledge ('ilm) / 
That is acquired from the outside is higher

They have made acquiring knowledge a condition in reforming it / 
Since there is no way you can open a door without its key

Thus, there is no way for someone seeking their station to arrive / 
As long as they have not acquired four types of knowledge

These are: knowledge of God’s essence (dhāt) and attributes / 
As well as jurisprudence (fiqh), ḥadīth and the science of states (ḥālāt)

This is the path of clear proof (burhān) / 
And it is for everyone who is determined and wakeful

al-Saraqusṭī’s description of the path of ishrāq seems closest to our description of the 
vertical aspect of God’s light from the Introduction. He writes that those following this 
path leave their spiritual growth in God’s hands and dig deeper within themselves 
through dhikr to develop a more intimate and sincere relationship with their Creator. On 
the other hand, the path of burhān seems more oriented towards the horizontal 
dimension. This is clear through the explicit mention of the disciplines of theology, fiqh

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and hadîth as prerequisites. Al-Saraqûṣî’s validation of both the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of Sufi practice establishes his and his audience’s awareness of the differing dimensions of God’s light and the distinct manner of responding to them. It also indicates the persistent presence of vertically-oriented Sufism within Marînid Morocco despite the Marînid-Mâlikî establishment’s domination of the religious field. As Marînid political power began to decline in the late 14th/early 15th century, the balance of power between these discursive currents began to shift. The political reemergence of the shuraḥāʾ during this period, along with the celebrated career of the Sufi shaykh Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazûlî (d.c. 870/1466), stimulated the reorientation of Morocco’s religious field towards a new regime of religiopolitical authority.

A. Sharfianism and the Jazûliyya in late-Marînid Morocco

The reign of the last Marînid Sultan ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Marînî (r. 823-869/1420-1465) witnessed the emergence of Sharfianism as a defining mode of discourse within Moroccan religious and political life.36 The beneficiaries of royal patronage under the Marînid dynasty, Morocco’s shuraḥāʾ had grown into a powerful sociopolitical bloc by the beginning of the 15th century. As Marînid power faltered, the shuraḥāʾ asserted themselves as defenders of Islam and the Prophet Muḥammad through their support of popular jihād movements. The Marînid Dynasty abandoned jihād in the wake of their

36 Sharfianism refers to the belief that the shuraḥāʾ, the recognized descendents of the Prophet Muḥammad, should serve as religious and political leaders. Sharfianism was a particular feature of Moroccan religious and political life after the fall of the Marînid Dynasty in the 9th/15th century. See Berque, Ulémas, 32ff; Stephen Cory, “Breaking the Khaldunian Cycle? The Rise of Sharfianism as the Basis for Political Legitimacy in Early Modern Morocco,” Journal of North African Studies, September 1, 2008, 377–94. For more sources, see below, nt. 41.
defeat at Rio Salado in 741/1340 and the loss of Algeciras in 744/1344. By the 9th/15th century, this position had grown problematic as Spain and Portugal closed in on Nasrid Granada and launched their first sustained campaigns against Moroccan ports. In 817/1415, Prince Henry the Navigator attacked the vital Mediterranean port city of Sabta by surprise. This defeat sent shockwaves throughout Morocco. In its wake, local jihād movements emerged to respond to Portugal’s continued expansion along Morocco’s coast. However, these popular defensive units received little to no support from the Marīnid Dynasty. In the absence of Sultanic support, the shurafā’ stepped in as jihād leaders. In 841/1437, the shurafā’ launched a successful campaign to defend Tangier. This victory bolstered these families’ religious and political legitimacy at the expense of Sultan ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq. Before long, many Moroccans came to view the shurafā’ as the only group qualified to serve as Morocco’s religious and political leaders. Sharifian sentiments were bolstered by the career of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazīlī (d. 870/1466) who practiced Sufism according to the teachings of the 7th/13th

38 Scott Kugle, Rebel Between Spirit and Law (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006), 81.
39 Kugle, Rebel, 81.
40 Classical treatments of Sharifianism and ‘Maraboutism’ tend to emphasize how the religiopolitical authority inherent in Sharifianism granted Morocco’s rulers and some Sufi leaders a tremendous amount of autocratic power. They also tend to view the power associated with Sharifian lineage as self-evident and hereditary, so that it went unchallenged and supported the formation of ruling dynasties, both at the Sultanic and local level. More recent revisionist studies have shed new light on these arguments. Vincent Cornell’s Realm of the Saint identifies the discursive roots of Sharifianism in Jazīlī thought. He also indentifies the emphasis on Sharifian nobility as an acquired (ḥasab) rather than hereditary (nasab) trait. For classical treatments of Sharifianism see Alfred Bel, La Religion musulmane en Berbérie: esquisse d’histoire et de sociologie religieuses (Paris: P. Geuthner, 1938); Berque, Ulémases; Fatima Harrak, “State and Religion in Eighteenth Century Morocco: The Religious Policy of Sidi Muḥammad B. ’Abd Allāh (1757-1790)” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989). For revisionist approaches to this topic, see Henry Munson Jr., Religion and Power in Morocco (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); Vincent J. Cornell, Realm of
century Moroccan Sufi scholar, Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī (d. 655/1258). al-Shādhilī was known for his distinctive emphasis on revering the Prophet Muḥammad as a spiritual and social exemplar.  

al-Jazūlī elevated the Sharifian aspect of Shādhilī Sufism. He taught his students to immerse themselves in the remembrance of God (dhikr) and cultivate an intense love and devotion for the Prophet Muḥammad. He authored a collection of praises upon the Prophet Muḥammad, entitled Dalā’il al-Khayrāt, which he incorporated into his community’s devotional regimen. al-Jazūlī also openly promoted his status as a sharīf and subsequent proximity to the Prophet Muḥammad. This quality led him to claim the status of “the connecting shaykh” (al-shaykh al-wāṣil) who was granted privileged access to the Divine Truth. From this position, al-Jazūlī established himself as an enlightened, vertically-operated religious authority who operated above and beyond the Marīnid-Mālikī religious establishment. Another hallmark of al-Jazūlī and his community was their commitment to jihād. al-Jazūlī frequently referred to his followers

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41 Cornell traces al-Shādhilī’s Sharifianism back to his link to Morocco’s first shurafā’ rulers, the Idrisid Dynasty, via his teacher Ibn Mshīḥ. He argues that Shādhilī Sharifianism found fertile ground in Morocco but was not developed by al-Shādhilī’s students in Egypt. See Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 198-212.


44 Cornell quotes from al-Jazūlī describing this shaykh as one who has arrived at maqām al-mushāhada, or “the station of witnessing”, which involved a total immersion in God’s light and knowledge. See Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 183.

45 Cornell quotes from al-Jazūlī, who stated: “Write down what you hear from me, for I am an intermediary between yourselves and the Truth. The Truth illuminates and the slave understands. He who is inspired toward the right (aṣ-ṣawāb) has an obligation to speak, and [his guidance] is a benefit to others.” See Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 183. “The Truth” (al-ḥaqq) is one of God’s names in the Qur’ān.
as “strivers” (mujtahidūn) and “warriors” (mujāhidūn) as he personally participated in the shurafāʿ-­led, popular jihād movement to defend Tangier from a Portuguese offensive in 841/1437. On this basis, al-­Jazūlī succeeded in gaining a large following. Historians estimate that his first community, based in Asafī, on Morocco’s Southern Atlantic coast, numbered up to 65,000 members.

The nature al-­Jazūlī’s religious discourse earned him the ire of the Marīnid religious establishment. An undated letter from al-­Jazūlī to Marīnid scholars addresses the latter’s suppression of his followers. al-­Jazūlī acknowledges these scholars’ disapproval of his claims to dialog directly with God (mukālama and muḥādatā). He also acknowledges their denial of certain Jazūlī practices, such as shaving new adepts’ heads, which Marīnid scholars considered an unlawful innovation (bidʿa). al-­Jazūlī argued the contrary, tying these practices to the Prophet Muḥammad’s sunna and the known practices of earlier generations of Moroccan Sufis, including Abū al-‘Abbās al-­Sabī (d. 600/1204).

As al-­Jazūlī’s community grew more popular, this discursive conflict grew political. In 863/1459, the Marīnid governor of Asafī expelled al-­Jazūlī and his followers from the city. al-­Jazūlī then moved to Afūghal, in the mountains to Asafī’s South, where his community continued to grow and flourish. In 869/1465, members of Fez’s al-­Jūfī shurafāʿ family led a revolt that led to the assassination of Sultan ‘Abd al-­Ḥaqq and the establishment of a shurafāʿ-­led government in the city. al-­Jazūlī was not

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46 Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 185-­6.
49 Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 188.
involved in this rebellion. Nonetheless, the al-Jūṭī family and their supporters benefitted from the Jazūliyya’s galvanization of the pro-shurafā’ and pro-jihād sentiments.\(^{50}\) In the wake of al-Jazūlī’s death in 870/1466, his students dispersed across Morocco, diffusing the Jazūliyya’s “socially conscious mysticism” along with the call for jihād.\(^{51}\) This call intensified after Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Waṭṭāṣī (d. 910/1504) ended Jūṭī rule in Fez in 876/1472, establishing the Waṭṭāṣid dynasty. al-Waṭṭāṣī lacked tribal support, limiting his power to Fez and Northern Morocco and leaving the rest of the country ungoverned. Severely weakened, al-Waṭṭāṣī adopted a policy of non-resistance towards Spain and Portugal in order to focus on responding to domestic threats to his power.\(^{52}\) The Jazūliyya brotherhood stepped into this void and expanded rapidly across Morocco’s countryside. In addition to providing education, spiritual guidance and facilitating trade, local Jazūlī leaders also provided consistent and effective resistance to Portuguese expansion along Morocco’s coast. Through jihād, the Jazūliyya positioned themselves and the shurafā’ as Morocco’s defenders and the champions of Islam.

B. The Jazūliyya and the rise of the Saʿdī Dynasty (10\(^{th}/16\(^{th}\) century)

\(^{50}\) While there is no evidence that the Jazūliyya supported the Jūṭīs, Kugle argues that the Jūṭī rebellion would not have succeeded without the popular support for the shurafā’ and jihād that the Jazūliyya had helped to spread. See Kugle, 89-90.


\(^{52}\) This policy was formalized by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 898/1494. See Muḥammad Ḥajjī, al-Haraka al-Fikriyya bi-l-Maghrīb fiʿahd al-Saʿdiyyīn (Rabat, Morocco: Dār al-Maghrib lil-Taʿlīf wa-l-Tarjamah wa-l-Nashr, 1976), v. 1, 40.
In the Sūs, the Jazūlī leaders Barakāt b. Muḥammad al-Tīdsī (d.c. 917/1511) and Muḥammad b. Mubārak al-Aqāwī (d. 924/1518) coordinated jihād activities against Portuguese forces operating out of Santa Cruz da Cabo da Gue, located at the mouth of the Māsa river in the Sūs. Though they succeeded in limiting Portuguese raiding, al-Tīdsī and al-Aqāwī realized their individual efforts would not be enough to free their communities from the Portuguese threat. In 915/1509, the Jazūlī community in the Sūs pledged allegiance to Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Tāgmadārtī, a shārīf from neighboring Darʿa, who was the student of the Jazūlī shaykh ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Maṭghārī (d.c. 928/1522). Al-Aqāwī met with Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān at his zāwiya in Aqā that same year. After meeting, they agreed to meet again a year later at Barakāt b. Muḥammad’s zāwiya in Tīdsī. There, the Sūsī community pledged allegiance to al-Tāgmadārtī who took on the title of al-qāʾim bi-amr Allāh, or ‘the one upholding God’s commandment.’ After defeating Portuguese forces in the Sūs, Muḥammad al-Qāʾim moved his forces across the High Atlas mountains to Afūghāl, the site of al-Jazūlī’s zāwiya. From there he and his son, Aḥmad al-Aʿraj (d. 964/1557), continued to fight Portuguese forces based in Asafī. Al-Aʿraj succeeded his father, after his death in 923/1517, and drove the Portuguese back to Asafī in 927/1521. In the wake of this victory, the residents of Marrakech pledged their allegiance to al-Aʿraj as their Sultan.

This marked the beginning of the Saʿdī challenge to the Waṭṭāsid Dynasty in Fez.

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54 Hajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 42-3.
55 Hajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 43.
56 Hajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 43.
The Sa’dī family’s political legitimacy rested on their status as *shurafā’* and their numerous successful *jihād* campaigns against the Portuguese. They also benefitted greatly from the Jazūliyya brotherhood’s support. The Jazūliyya’s third *shaykh*, 'Abd Allah al-Ghazwānī (d. 935/1529), publicly endorsed the Sa’dī family as Morocco’s legitimate rulers after his imprisonment by Waṭṭāsid Sultan Muhammad al-Burtuqlī (r. 911-931/1505-1524) in the 1520s. This turned the tide of public opinion in favor of the Sa’dīs. By 943/1536, religious scholars in Fez convinced al-Burtuqlī to recognize Sa’dī rule in Southern Morocco in the treaty of Bū ‘Uqba. In 948/1541, after expelling the Portuguese from Agādir, Asafī and Azemmour, the Sa’dī leader Muḥammad al-Shaykh initiated a full scale war against the Waṭṭāsid s. After a back and forth campaign, Muḥammad al-Shaykh defeated the Waṭṭāsid s at the Battle of Tādlā and captured Fez in 961/1554. al-Shaykh then ascended to Morocco’s throne, completing the Sa’dīs’ decades-long rise to power.

Under the Sa’dī Sultans, Southern Morocco, and Wādī Dar’a in particular, experienced a social, cultural and economic fluorescence. Tāgmadārt, the Sa’dīs’ ancestral home and first capital, was located in the valley’s center. Additionally, Dar’a served as a key defensive barrier between the Sa’dī capital of Marrakech, the Ottoman Empire in Algeria and European maritime incursions through the Sūs. It was also an indispensable link between Morocco’s craft and agricultural industries, located in the

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57 Cornell considers his support to have been critical to the establishment of the Sa’dī state. Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, 261-3.
Gharb, and the lucrative Trans-Saharan trade routes. As a result, Darʿa received a great deal of attention from the Saʿdī state, particularly during the rule of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr (r. 986/1578-1012/1603) who used Darʿa as a base for his campaigns against the Songhay Empire. He removed the Banū Maʿqil from Darʿa and relocated them across Morocco.

In their place, he stationed military garrisons throughout the valley to assure the safety of caravan traffic. During this period, Saʿdī forces succeeded in defending Darʿa’s merchants and farmers from tribal raiders. This newfound security, combined with an influx of gold, slaves and other goods via the Trans-Saharan trade, brought unprecedented prosperity to Wādī Darʿa, particularly after the conquest of Timbuktu in 998/1591. Many of Darʿa’s residents served in the Saʿdī army during the Sahara Campaign and many remained in Timbuktu as traders and government administrators.

Renewed social prestige and wealth also reinvigorated Darʿa’s longstanding tradition of religious scholarship.

The career of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Jazūlī al-Bakrī (d.c. 960/1553) illustrates the opportunities present to Darʿa’s scholars and their families during the Saʿdī period. al-Bakrī was based in Tamgrūt and stayed in regular contact with Muslim scholars in the Middle East thanks to the Saʿdī’s sponsorship of the ḥajj. His correspondence included a discussion with Egyptian scholar ʿAbbād al-Raḥman b. Muḥammad al-Tājūrī about correcting the qibla in Moroccan mosques. Two of al-Bakrī’s sons served as Saʿdī

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60 al-Būzaydi, al-Tarikh al-Ijtimaʿī, 85-6.
61 al-Būzaydi, al-Tarikh al-Ijtimaʿī, 97-8.
62 al-Būzaydi, al-Tarikh al-Ijtimaʿī, 86.
63 al-Būzaydi notes that during this period, Darʿa paid 150 gold mithqāls in taxes every year. See: al-Būzaydi, al-Tarikh al-Ijtimaʿī, 86.
64 al-Būzaydi, al-Tarikh al-Ijtimaʿī, 86.
ambassadors to Istanbul. They took advantage of their diplomatic travel to perform *hajj* and to continue their studies with Muslim scholars in Egypt and the Hijaz.\(^{65}\) Abū al-Qāsim b. `Umar al-Tafnūṭī (d. 953/1546) came to Darʿa from Fez, settling in Tamgrūṭ at *zāwiya* Sayyid al-Nās. An outstanding religious scholar and literate, al-Tafnūṭī was also an accomplished craftsman who required his students to take up a vocation to support themselves through their studies. Biographical sources indicate his *zāwiya* provided dormitory accommodations for his students.\(^{66}\)

The Saʿdī dynasty’s affiliation with the Jazūliyya brotherhood encouraged the growth of *zāwiya*-based Sufism in Wāḍū Darʿa. The Jazūliyya brotherhood had been present in Darʿa since the 9th/15th century when Sīdī ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jazūlī migrated from the Sūs and established several lodges in the Fezwāta oasis, to the north of Tamgrūṭ.\(^{67}\) During the 10th/16th century, the Jazūlī *shaykh* ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr al-Matgħarī (d. 927/1520) established a *zāwiya* near the Saʿdī residence in Tāgmadārt. al-Matgħarī tutored Muḥammad al-Qāʿīm bi Amr Allāh’s sons Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Saʿdī and Muḥammad al-Aʿraj.\(^{68}\) The strength of Darʿa’s Jazūlī community can also be seen in its connections with the *zāwiya* of Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Samlālī (d. 971/1564), located in Ilīgh in the neighboring Sūs region.\(^{69}\) Travel between Darʿa and Ilīgh was common during this period.\(^{70}\) Darʿa was also home to several Qādirī Sufi communities


\(^{70}\) al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, *al-Durar al-Muraṣṣaʿa* chronicles this exchange. See “ʿAbd al-ʿĀlī al-
during the Saʿdī period. Abū al-Qāsim b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq (d.c. 10th/16th century) established a Qādiriyya zāwiya in Tinzūlīn, to the north of the Saʿdī qaṣaba in Tagmadart. He was known for his ecstatic states and intimate discourses with the Divine, which were compared to those of al-Jazūlī. Ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq was a close associate of Aḥmad b. Mūsā al-Samlāli and was also close with the Saʿdī family. 71 Darʿa was also home to members of the Zarrūqiyya-Ghāziyya Sufi tradition. 72 In 983/1575, ʿUmar b. Aḥmad al-Anṣārī (d. 1010/1600) established a zāwiya in Tamgrūt to preserve and transmit these teachings. 73

The growth of a multi-generational scholarly community and the emergence of communal, zāwiya-based Sufism in Darʿa during the Saʿdī period created an environment ripe for the emergence of a religious community in the style of the Nāṣiriyya. However, the turmoil that engulfed Morocco in the aftermath of Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s sudden death in 1011/1603 profoundly disrupted this pattern of social and cultural development. In the absence of a clear successor, al-Manṣūr’s sons vied with one another for their father’s throne. After the Saʿdī state faltered, the emergence of several regional challengers to the Saʿdī throne plunged Morocco into a civil war that lasted nearly seven decades.

Moroccan society would remain in a state of turmoil until 1078/1668 when Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī (d. 1083/1672) succeeded in unifying the country under his rule,

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72 The Zarrūqiyya-Ghāziyya Sufi tradition reflects the teachings of the Moroccan Sufi Scholar Ṭhammad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) as transmitted by Abū Qāsim al-Ghāzī (d. 981-2/1574). Maḥammad b. Nāṣīr revived this tradition in the 11th/17th century. We discuss this history in detail below.
establishing the 'Alawī dynasty.\footnote{See Laroui, \textit{The History of the Maghrib}, 271ff; Abun-Nasr, \textit{A History of the Maghrib}, 228ff.} The Sa`dī – 'Alawī interregnum is known as the Maraboutic Crisis, or the age of the zāwiya princes (umarā’ al-zawāyā).\footnote{This term has also been translated as the “Maraboutic crisis”. This wording is borrowed from Eickelman who uses it to describe Morocco’s political history from the 9th/15th to the end of the 11th/17th century. See Dale F. Eickelman, \textit{Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center} (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), 19-32. I use it differently, specifically to refer to the Sa`dī – 'Alawī interregnum that lasted from 1012/1603 – 1078/1668 C.E. “Maraboutic Crisis” is consistent in meaning with the Arabic term umarā’ al-zawāyā, or “zāwiya princes”, which Moroccan historians use to describe this period. See Abū Sālim ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad al- Ayyāshī, \textit{Iqtīfā’ al-Athar ba’da Dhaḥāb ʿAḥī al-Aṭhār: Fihris Abī Sālim al-‘Ayyāshī, 11 H/17 M.}, ed. Nafisa Dhababī (Rabat: Université Mohammed V, 1996), 21. }

The Jazūliyya brotherhood succeeded in defining Morocco’s religious and political discourse during the Sa`dī period and into the Maraboutic Crisis through their commitment to the total love of the Prophet Muḥammad and jihād. However, a second Sufi tradition coexisted with the Jazūliyya during this period and sought to counter its perceived excesses. Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493) was a Sufi scholar from Fez and al-Jazūlī’s younger contemporary. In the wake of the Jazūliyya’s expansion in the 10th/16th century, Zarrūq preached a return to a more horizontal and pietistic form of Sufi practice. He sharply criticized the late Jazūliyya’s popularization of Sufi practices unsubstantiated by the Qur’ān and sunna. While Zarrūq’s teachings had a limited impact on Morocco’s religious field during his lifetime, his students successfully preserved and transmitted his tradition across throughout the 10th/16th century. As support for Jazūlī Sufism waned during the Maraboutic Crisis, Zarrūq’s tradition reemerged through the career of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī. As his community spread across Morocco during the second half of the 11th/17th century, the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood supplanted the Jazūliyya as Morocco’s most popular and influential Sufi order.\footnote{Fatima Harrak writes “During the 18th century the Nasiri zawiya was undoubtedly the most...}
C. Clashing Perspectives: Zarrūq’s Critique of the late-Jazūliyya

Ahmad Zarrūq was born and raised in Fez during the reign of Marīnid Sultan ʿAbd al-Haqq in the late 9th/15th century. At an early age, Zarrūq chose to dedicate himself to religious studies. During his formative years, he gained mastery of Islam’s scholarly and spiritual traditions through his studies at Fez’s al-Qarawīyīn Mosque at the зāwiya of Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Zaytūnī (d. 901/1496). Later, as a young man, Zarrūq became the protégé of Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Qūrī (d. 872/1467), a Shādhilī Sufi master and Fez’s chief jurisconsult (mufīf). Zarrūq’s relationship with al-Zaytūnī and al-Qūrī exposed him to two distinct approaches to Islamic spirituality. al-Zaytūnī was a popular, vertically-oriented Shādhilī Sufi in the same vein as al-Jazūli. He was known as a majdhūb, or practitioner of jadhb-oriented Sufism. On the other hand, al-Qūrī practiced the horizontally-oriented sulūk tradition of the Shādhilī masters Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh al-Iskandarī (d. 708/1309) and Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundī (d. 792/1390). In this way, al-Qūrī emphasized fulfillment of the sharīʿa and the scrupulous emulation of the Prophet Muḥammad’s sunna and Prophetic character.

Ahmad Zarrūq managed to balance his relationships with al-Zaytūnī and al-Qūrī up until the Jūṭī revolt in 869/1465. al-Zaytūnī and his community aligned themselves with the Jūṭī shurafāʾ, whereas al-Qūrī opposed their rebellion, viewing it as a source of powerful and the most popular Moroccan religious order.” See Harrak, “State and Religion”, 150-1.

Kugle, Rebel, 70-1.

Kugle identifies the study of Ibn ʿAtāʾ Allāh’s Book of Wisdom and its commentary by al-Rundī as key features of the “juridical” Sufi movement that existed in Fez during the Marīnid period. See Kugle, Rebel, 56-62.
civil disorder (*fitna*). Zarrūq was forced to choose between his masters. He ultimately sided with al-Qūrî and broke off his relationship with al-Zaytūnī. However, after al-Qūrî’s death in 872/1467, Zarrūq faced retaliation from the Jūṭīs and their allies. He was forced to leave Fez in 873/1468 and traveled to the Middle East to perform the *hajj*. Afterwards, he went to Cairo where he studied with Aḥmad b. ʿUqba al-Ḥaḍramī, the leader of the Egyptian Shādhilī community and a fellow *sulāk*-oriented Sufi master.  

After seven years, al-Ḥaḍramī directed Zarrūq to return to Morocco. Upon his return, Zarrūq found that Fez, now under Waṭṭāsid rule, remained tumultuous. Zarrūq, dismayed by the late-Jazūliyya’s growth and influence, quickly became an outspoken critic against them. This earned him few friends in a predominantly Jazūlī religious milieu. After just four years, in 884/1480, Zarrūq left Fez as an exile, never to return.  

After performing a second *hajj*, he settled outside of Misurata, Libya where he lived until his death in 899/1493.  

The roots of Zarrūq’s criticism of the late Jazūliyya can be found in the inherent, though not mutually exclusive, tension between the *jadhb* and *sulāk* approaches to Islamic spirituality. *Jadhb* reflected the vertical dimension of God’s light and emphasizes

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79 Kugle, *Rebel*, 92-5
80 Under his guidance, Zarrūq composed numerous doctrinal works that helped to developed a nascent reformist vision. These included eight commentaries on al-Iskandarī’s *Book of Wisdom*, which Zarrūq had studied and commented on previously under al-Qūrî, as well as an original work entitled *al-Naṣīḥa al-Kubrā*, in which Zarrūq elaborated his vision of proper Sufi practices grounded in Islam’s normative scriptural tradition. See ʿAbd Allāh Najmī, “Zarrūq, Ahmad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿIssā al-Burnusī al-Fāsī,” in *Maʿlamat Al-Maghribi* (Sale, Morocco: Matḥābi Salā, 2001), v. 14, 4629.
81 Najmī writes that while the conditions of Zarrūq’s departure are not clear, he was forced to leave without his wife and two sons, with whom he was later reunited. Najmī, “Zarrūq”, v. 14, 4628-9.
82 Najmī, v. 14, 4629.
seeker’s one-on-one relationship with God. In pre-modern Morocco, the term majdhūb described a Sufī who displayed an affinity for ecstatic states (ahwāl), miraculous deeds (karāmāt) and intimate discourses with the Divine (munājāt). These characteristics are understood as manifestations of God’s commandment (amr). On the other hand, Sulūk-oriented Sufism is horizontally oriented and focuses on the seeker’s gradual spiritual training (tarbiya) under the guidance of a verified teacher (shaykh or murshid). Sulūk-oriented Sufis did not emphasize attaining states or experiencing miracles. Rather, they warned that these phenomena could distract a seeker from attaining the ultimate goal of enlightenment in the Divine presence. In the Introduction, we referred to the Qur’anic story of the Prophet Moses and the Guide as illustrating the relationship between vertical and horizontal authority. Extending that example to our present discussion, we can say that the Guide represents the jadhb-based approach due to his relationship with God’s commandment. By contrast, the Prophet Moses reflects the sulūk-oriented perspective.

While practitioners of sulūk in pre-modern Morocco respected jadhb as a legitimate approach to Islamic spirituality, they decried the popularization of jadhb and its potential to undermine sharī’a norms. Writing in the 11th/17th century, Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Fāsī (d. 1109/1698) acknowledges that the majdhūb possesses a very high station and intimate relationship with God. However, he writes that following a majdhūb poses a severe risk to seekers. al-Fāsī quotes an anonymous scholar who argues that the majdhūb’s spirituality should not be imitated because they arrived at their stations not through their own effort, but through God’s decision to draw them close to Him.83

Furthermore, because a majdhūb is usually immersed in a spiritual state (ḥāl), they are not fully responsible for fulfilling their sharīʿa obligations. As a result, someone following them may come under the impression that following the sharīʿa is not necessary to attain spiritual enlightenment. This places them in a paradox. al-Fāsī’s source states:

If you follow such a person [i.e. a majdhūb] in all of their deeds and you do not obey God’s commandments and His prohibitions, and you violate the sharīʿa, then you’ve let your feet slip… and you’ve made light of the sacred law (sharīʿa) of the leader of the Messengers’, peace be upon him … but, if you disobey [such a shaykh] and obey God’s commandments and prohibitions, then you’ve violated the oath of companionship (ṣuhba) that you both affirmed…

However, al-Fāsī and his interlocutors do not endorse following a pure sālik. While such a person would follow the sharīʿa, and have a perfect exoteric understanding of the religion, they are unsuitable as spiritual guides due to their lack of inward knowledge, especially of the soul (nafs). Rather, al-Fāsī advises the seeker to look for a shaykh who is both a sālik and a majdhūb. al-Fāsī’s sources label such a person as either “a fully-realized shaykh” (shaykh muḥaqqaq) or a “verifying guide” (muḥaqiq murshid).

We find echoes of al-Fāsī’s discussion in the conclusion of al-Mabāḥith al-Ašliyya, which features a multi-faceted critique of “Sufis of our age and the confusion of our time.” Writing in the 9th/15th century, al-Saraqusṭī condemned Sufism’s transformation from an authentic pursuit of spiritual intimacy with God into a pretext for the communal pursuit of worldly enrichment and power. He identifies this shift with the

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84 al-Fāsī, “Tuhfat”, 5b.
85 al-Fāsī, “Tuhfat”, 7a.
86 al-Fāsī, “Tuhfat”, 7a.

https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110019337?rk=21459;2.
popularization of samā’, the melodic recitation of poems and prayers in public, and dancing.\(^\text{88}\) While al-Saraqūṣṭī valorizes samā’ elsewhere in al-Mabāḥīth,\(^\text{89}\) he decries its routinization within a communal structure. Additionally, he condemns collection of dues (futūḥāt) which, in his words, had turned Sufi communities into rackets that take from the rich to support the poor.\(^\text{90}\) He also censures the tendency to ethnic tribalism among the Sufi communities of his day.\(^\text{91}\)

al-Saraqūṣṭī’s concluding criticism addresses the differences in the role of Divine inspiration (waḥy) within sulāk and jadhb. He writes:

[One] who claims [to have experienced Divine counsels]\(^\text{92}\) or [the unity of the Divine and the Creation]\(^\text{93}\) / 
All of these are innovations (bid’a) that undermine Sufism’s fundamental principles

To say, “I am the one that I love” / 
Prior to attaining the state of fanā – how far is that [from the path]

Their claim that their inspired knowledge / 
Frees them from the rules of God-reverence (taqwā), is not the path of the sunna

[One who rules] that they are above the sharī’a / 
Is cut off from the men of the path

Whoever says: ‘I am the shaykh, so follow me’ / 
But has no knowledge, they are mad

\(^{90}\) al-Saraqūṣṭī, “Matan al-Mabāḥīth al-Asliyya”, in al-Lawā’īh al-Fāsiyya, 50, line 383; also on 52, line 418.
\(^{93}\) al-Saraqūṣṭī uses the term “incarnation” (al-ḥulāl), which Fode Drame defines as describing the ability of the Divine to go within the Creation. See Fode Drame, “Commentary on al-Mabahith al-Asliyya text in Suluk: Lesson 8”
Whoever says: ‘Me, I’m a sufi’, but is yet /
to know the categories of the soul (hudūd al-nafs), they are blind

They love the people of Sufism but do not follow their path /
There is no benefit [in that love]

Their actions that /
Violate the outward meaning of the shar’ā are an unlawful innovation\textsuperscript{94}

Here, al-Saraqusṭī maintains the need for balance between the vertical and horizontal dimensions of Islamic spirituality. He recognizes the Sufi’s ability to obtain Divine inspiration (\textit{wahy}). However, he asserts this knowledge must be interpreted within the bounds of the Qur’ān and Islamic law. al-Fāṣī reprises this argument in \textit{Tuhfat Ahl al-Siddīqiyya}. Prior to his discussion of \textit{jadhb} and \textit{sulūk}, he discusses how \textit{wahy} is available to the awliyā’, either through the mediation of angels, inspiration (\textit{ilhām}) or a renewed remembrance (\textit{al-dhikr al-muḥdath}) received by their souls.\textsuperscript{95} Aḥmad Zarrūq provided the discursive bridge between al-Saraqusṭī in the 9\textsuperscript{th}/15\textsuperscript{th} century and al-Fāṣī two centuries later.

Zarrūq was the first Moroccan Sufi to teach and comment upon \textit{al-Mabāḥith al-Asliyya} upon his return to Fez in the 1480s. al-Saraqusṭī’s text provided Zarrūq with a platform to articulate his horizontal, \textit{sulūk}-oriented spiritual discourse. The central pillar of Zarrūq’s Sufism was the cultivation of “reverent love” of God and His Messenger in the seeker’s heart. In contrast to the \textit{majdhūb}’s ecstatic love, reverent love bound the \textit{sālik} to follow God’s commandments and prohibitions as well as the Prophetic \textit{sunna}.

\textsuperscript{95} al-Fāṣī, “Tuhfat”, 4b.
Zarrūq lays the foundation of this approach in his systematic elaboration of Sufi principles, *Qawāʿid al-Taṣawwuf*. There he writes that sincere love leads the seeker to “aggrandize (taʿẓīm) that which God has aggrandized.”

96 The seeker should not think that sincerely loving God should lead them to abandon their worship or look down upon fearing Hellfire and hoping to enter Paradise. Rather, Zarrūq argues the sincere lover should maintain their awe of Heaven and Hell and God’s commandments and prohibitions because God aggrandizes them in the Qur’an and *sunna*.

97 Zarrūq’s emphasis on aggrandizement (taʿẓīm) links his concept of love to the Qur’anic definition of reverence (taqwā). Sūra al-Ḥajj, verse 32 states:

So it is that whoever aggrandizes (yuʾazzīm) the insignia of Allah, that truly comes from the reverence of Allah that is in the hearts.

98 Zarrūq further elaborates this notion in his commentary on *al-Mabāḥīth al-ʿAšliyya*. Here he argues that reverent love should lead the seeker and their community to practice spirituality entirely within the bounds of Islamic law:

As for one who “claims to love [God] without following (ittibāʿ),” this person has a shortcoming [in their spirituality] […] It is reported in an authentic tradition, “It was said, ‘O Messenger of God, [what about] a person who says they love a people but does not join them?’” [The Prophet Muhammad] said, ‘You are with those whom you love.’” Likewise, another authentic [hadith] states, “A man said, ‘when is the hour, O Messenger of God?’ He responded, ‘What have you prepared for it?’ The man answered, ‘Nothing, but I love God and His Messenger.’” [The Prophet Muhammad] said, ‘Then you are with those whom you love.’ […] God the Exalted has also stated, “Say, [O Muḥammad], ‘If you truly love God, then follow me, and God will love you.’” (3:31) Thus, [God made] the truth of one’s love depend on their total following. The reward of this is His love, which also fundamentally depends on one’s faith, as shown at the end of the next verse: “And if they turn away, then God truly does not love those who are…


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ungrateful.” (3:32) So, reflect on and become well grounded in this, may God make you successful.99

Historian Ali Khushaim writes:

We see that [in Zarrūq’s] thought, love and obedience (ṭāʿah) are completely, mutually interconnected. Thus, the sincere Sufi lover is someone who upholds God’s obligatory commandments as He revealed them to His prophet and sent them down in His Quran. He is also someone who earnestly and strictly follows the sunna of God’s Messenger, and the sayings and deeds that have been authoritatively transmitted about him. Just as obedience is a sign of love, so total obedience demonstrates one’s complete, perfect love… It is possible for [the servant’s] love to be mixed with disobedience, but this love is lacking. [In Zarrūq’s view], nothing satisfies a sincere lover except for the perfection of their love, which is love that is free from any disobedience.100

A practical example of Zarrūq’s reverent love can be found in a letter he wrote to two of his Moroccan adepts, ʿAbd Allāh al-Maghrīwī and ʿAbd al-Mālik b. Abī Saʿd.101

Zarrūq opens his letter with five recommendations for his students: pray their obligatory prayers in congregation, avoid fighting with oppressive people, only do business with such people after turning back to God, fulfill the rights of others, and avoid pushing their souls too hard in pursuit of religious goals.102 He then outlines a regimen of voluntary worship for his students and sets guidelines so his students do not stray from following the sunna. In conclusion he states, “a little work according to the sunna is better than a lot that is innovative (bidʿa).”103 He then compares the seeker to a bee, saying the seeker

102 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība, 277.
103 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība, 278.
may peruse and sample different nectars but can only make honey under their teacher’s direction.\textsuperscript{104}

Zarrūq continues by enumerating five prohibitions: excessive mixing in their worship and other matters, having a poor opinion of God’s servants, being deceived about the path to the Truth, defending their soul (\textit{nafs}), and to involve themselves in others’ business. Notably, he defines this last point as including “opportunistic \textit{jihād}.”\textsuperscript{105} Zarrūq writes, “[an example of entering into others’ business] is someone who goes out to perform \textit{jihād} without the permission of a Muslim community (\textit{jamā’a min al-Muslimīn}). In doing so, he has given himself over to tribulation (\textit{fitna}).”\textsuperscript{106} Later, Zarrūq further explains his prohibition to mix in worship or otherwise when he writes, “whoever recites many litanies and performs acts of worship that are not authenticated by the \textit{sunna}, their opening (\textit{fath}) will be far from them because they are like someone who is looking to dig a well to draw water but moves from place to place only digging a hand’s length at a time.”\textsuperscript{107} Zarrūq also discourages his students from mixing with other Sufis as well as religious scholars (\textit{fuqahā’}). He states, “Beware of mixing with other Sufis of this time (\textit{fuqarā’ hādhā al-zamān}) because they are not trustworthy […] Revere religious scholars because they are the bearers of God’s law (\textit{al-sharī’a}), but do not mix with them because their souls have control over them.”\textsuperscript{108}

Zarrūq’s embrace of reverent love and horizontal, \textit{sulūk}-oriented Sufism shaped his critique of the late Jazūliyya in Waṭṭāsid-era Morocco. In his work \textit{‘Uddat al-Murīd

\textsuperscript{104} al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, \textit{al-Ajwiba}, 278.
\textsuperscript{105} Kugle, \textit{Rebel}, 163.
\textsuperscript{106} al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, \textit{al-Ajwiba}, 178.
\textsuperscript{107} al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, \textit{al-Ajwiba}, 178.
\textsuperscript{108} al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, \textit{al-Ajwiba}, 179.
al-Ṣādiq, Zarrūq describes three qualities that lead to the corruption of one’s faith. The first is ignorance of the Quran and Prophetic sunna, which spoils one’s faith. The second is ignorance of the religious principles (uṣūl) that are the foundation of spiritual practice. Last is the love of worldly leadership (riyāsa) and success.\textsuperscript{109} Zarrūq identified all these as endemic to the Jazūliyya. Elsewhere, Zarrūq criticizes the brotherhood for its practice of mass initiations. New Jāzūlī adepts were required to publicly declare their repentance (tawba). This was confirmed in a public ritual initiated by al-Jazūlī in which the new adept’s head was shaven, signifying his renunciation of his previous, sinful ways. These ceremonies ended with a feast in celebration of the new members.\textsuperscript{110} Zarrūq expressed his concern at Jazūlī leaders’ adopting a religious practice that lacked precedent within the Quran or Prophetic sunna. The Jazūliyya argued that such practices broadened the appeal of living a pious, spiritually aware lifestyle to populations underserved by traditional Islamic religious institutions. However, Zarrūq countered that introducing uneducated people to innovative practices – termed bid’ā – kept them in ignorance of and permanently damaged their relationship to Islam’s scriptural tradition. Furthermore, Zarrūq questioned the Jazūlī leaders’ intentions. He argued that, if they were committed to reviving Islam, they would be content to uphold the Quran and Prophetic sunna without compromising to attract more followers. Rather, Zarrūq accused the Jazūliyya of seeking worldly success and leadership at the expense of religious propriety. He justified these claims by citing the Jazūliyya’s criticisms of Morocco’s religious scholars as well as their brotherhood’s internal divisions:

\textsuperscript{109} Cited in Kugle, Rebel, 170.
\textsuperscript{110} Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 230.
They move from one place to another with their servants. Some of them on their horses. They assert that by this they revive and display religion, while persuading the vulgar to believe that the ulama are obstructing the way to God, and warn the ignorant against them. So they became enemies of the learned and learning. Yet they are disunited because of the plentitude of their Shaikhs, and ramified into different groups, each group drawn up behind its Shaikh, speaking ill of the other group and its Shaikh. Thus enmity and hatred occurred among the Shaikhs to the degree that each of them wishes to drink the blood of the other. That is because of the rulers of this world. They have sold the Hereafter for this world and led astray many of God’s creatures and corrupted their faith. God said: “Those who cancel what God has revealed of the Book and sell it for a paltry price – they shall eat naught but fire in their bellies. God shall not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection nor purify them and there awaits them a painful chastisement” [Quran 2:174].

Zarrūq argues that a true religious revival would focus on unity rather than division, seeking to build consensus among opposed elements in society through a return to Islam’s universally recognized scriptural sources. Practicing bid’ a was not bad merely because of its lack of scriptural support, it was bad because it encouraged the development of particular religious perspectives that reinforced communal divisions over cohesion. Worldly ambition only exacerbated this potential.

Zarrūq also showed great concern over al-Jazūlī’s student ‘Amr al-Maghīṭī (d. 890/1485), known as al-Sayyāf, the ‘swordsman’. After al-Jazūlī’s death, al-Maghīṭī launched a jihād campaign against religious scholars and al-Jazūlī’s opponents in Southern Morocco. This campaign was ongoing when Zarrūq returned from his first exile from Fez in the 1480s. al-Maghīṭī’s campaign posed an acute challenge to Zarrūq’s religious sensibilities. On the one hand, al-Maghīṭī transgressed Islamic Law by engaging in jihād against fellow Muslims. Additionally, his ideology rejected the authority of the Qur’ān and sunna in favor of the Divine inspirations that al-Maghīṭī received. As Kugle

111 Quoted in Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 231.
writes, it was the implication of al-Maghīṭī’s discourse that most troubled Zarrūq. He records a discussion between Zarrūq and al-Qūrī in the wake of the Jūṭī rebellion in which al-Qūrī commented on al-Maghīṭī’s jihād, stating that, “[the key problem] revolves around the issue that [al-Maghīṭī] is claiming that the commands and rulings of the Qur’ān and Prophet Muhammad’s example are no longer valid, and that all that remains is [what] his own heart says to him from his Lord.”112 In his response (fatwa) to al-Maghīṭī’s movement, Zarrūq focuses on his claim to have “inherited prophethood” (wārith al-nubuwva) through the mystical figure al-Khīḍr.113 Zarrūq writes:

There is a Sufī community [whose leaders] claim to see the “men of the unseen” such as al-Khīḍr (upon him be peace) or others like him. They make public messages given to them by these unseen personalities, messages which are either forbidden lies or delusions with which the Devil has afflicted them through apparitions. Through such claims they may either come to power as rulers or perhaps be brought to ruin. I have hear that some from this community claim that Khīḍr is a prophet Messengers (nabī mursal)… and that whoever claims that Khīḍr achieved [only] sainthood has belittled Khīḍr and that belittling a prophet makes one an infidel. I have heard someone whom I trust describe how members of this community have said these exact words. My judgment is to be resigned to his right to claim what he claims, but to never be resigned to his calling others infidels who disbelieve him, because he has no definitive proof for others. If the matter is true for himself, he has no right to make believing it obligatory for others. For this is making an addition to the beliefs of Islamic faith for which there is no priniciple (aṣl) and no reliable precedent (mustanad).114

Zarrūq opposed the claims by al-Maghīṭī and the late-Jazūliyya to absolute, vertical religious authority. On a particular level, these claims bolstered al-Maghīṭī’s and others real conflict with their Muslim opponents. Their jihād further destabilized Wāṭṭāsid-era Moroccan society. On a universal level, Zarrūq perceived these claims as undermining the authority of the Qur’ān and sunna. Zarrūq appears to agree with al-Saraquṣṭī and al-

112 Quoted in Kugle, Rebel, 180.
113 Kugle, Rebel, 180.
114 Quoted in Kugle, Rebel, 180. Translation by Kugle.
Fāsī that it is possible for enlightened individuals to obtain wahy, but that these inspirations must be interpreted within the bounds of the sharī'a and sunna if made public at all.

D. The Transmission of Zarrūq’s Tradition in Morocco in the 10th/16th century

Aḥmad Zarrūq’s Sufi discourse continued to influence Morocco’s religious field during the 10th/16th century due to its transmission via transregional Sufi and scholarly networks.115 Zarrūq’s student Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Rāshidī (d. 931/1524) was largely responsible for maintaining this connection. al-Rāshidī was a controversial figure whose teachings reflected both the horizontal and vertical dimensions of Islamic spirituality. Nonetheless, his spiritual accomplishments and location in Western Algeria made him highly sought after by Moroccan students from the Tāfilāt, on Morocco’s Eastern Saharan frontier, and those performing the ḥajj pilgrimage. These students formed distinct traditions in 10th/16th century Morocco that both contributed to the religious culture established by the Jazūliyya and maintained Zarrūq’s reformist teachings into the 11th/17th century.

ʿAbd Allāh Najmī writes that, after leaving Morocco and establishing himself in Libya, Aḥmad Zarrūq made a habit of visiting the coastal Algerian city of Bijāya during the ḥajj season. Known as the “Little Mecca”, Bijāya was a prominent stopping point

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along the overland pilgrimage route across North Africa. During his visits, Zarrūq set up a school on the city’s outskirts to teach students traveling to Mecca and those returning to their homes in Algeria and Morocco. It was in Bijāya that Zarrūq taught Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Rāshidī in 892/1487. al-Rāshidī was a member of the pastoralist Arab Banū Rāshid tribe located in Western Algeria. He deeply impressed Zarrūq, leading the shaykh to publicly acknowledge al-Rāshidī’s high spiritual station and blessing (barakah) from God. Likewise, it appears that al-Rāshidī fully absorbed Zarrūq’s reformist teachings which he integrated into the Sufi teachings he acquired in the Middle East prior to meeting Zarrūq.

After completing his studies with Zarrūq, al-Rāshidī returned to his tribe to “command right and forbid wrong.” Specifically, he decried his tribemen’s social practices that contradicted the shariʿa and sunna. However, his efforts failed to change the Banū Rāshid. Eventually, al-Rāshidī relocated to his home village of Raʾs al-Māʾ and began to preach in the town’s marketplace. At this point, his discourse shifted to advocating for jadhb-oriented Sufism over adherence to the shariʿa. This led local jurists to charge him with practicing bidʿa. Upon interrogation, however, they found al-Rāshidī

117 Najmī writes that, “Zarrūq based himself outside of the city [i.e. Bijāya] in a village called Tamaqra, where al-Rāshidī studied with him and from which the Zarrūqī school of salafi, anti-bidʿa Sufism spread.” See: al-Tasawwuf wa-l-Bidʿa, 75-6.
121 Najmī, al-Tasawwuf wa-l-Bidʿa, 83.
122 Najmī, al-Tasawwuf wa-l-Bidʿa, 84-5.
to be an “ocean of knowledge.” The jurists dropped their charges and, instead, pledged themselves as al-Rāshidī’s students.  

al-Rāshidī’s counseling to one of his students during this period illustrate his complete embrace of jadhīb:

Whoever God intends for this path [i.e. the path of jadhīb], its way is to abandon any occupation that is not connected to God’s door. Its inward path is the abandonment of all rewards (ḥuẓūz). Once this occurs, the seeker is a majdhūb [i.e. practitioner of jadhīb] outwardly and inwardly, and does not concern themselves with anything other than their beloved. This is the majdhūb whose jahdb is perfect… Jadhība means the abandonment of creation for the Creator, and falsehood for the Truth. Is it not true that everything other than God is false? [Jadhība also means to abandon] the outward for the inward, and the inward for the inward of the inward, and the inward of the inward for the outward of the inward, and the nonexistent for what [truly] exists.

For al-Rāshidī, becoming a true practitioner of jadhīb, or majdhūb, requires abandoning one’s attachments to anything other than God. This means to worship God out of one’s sincere love for Him and not out of fear or punishment or hope for reward. For al-Rāshidī, such fears and hopes arise from the seeker’s attachment to the Creation rather than their Creator. This shortcoming could doom a seeker’s spiritual journey. al-Rāshidī taught that the servant’s love for God should liberate them from the burden of fear and incentive of hope, and should direct their hearts solely towards their Creator.

al-Rāshidī’s call for Muslims to liberate themselves through sincere love of God, rather than worship God out of fear or hope, questioned the notion of individual responsibility (taklīf) that governs obedience to the sharī’a. Algeria’s Zayyānid Sultans and their allies in the religious establishment saw this as a challenge to the Sultan-sharī’a

123 Najmī, al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid’ā, 84-7.
124 Quoted in Najmī, al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid’ā, 138.
125 Najmī, al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid’a, 176-84.
system of governance they supported. Adding to their suspicions, it was around this time that al-Rāshidī became active in jihād activity, leading his community in several attacks against the Spanish in Oran. He also voiced his support for Ottoman efforts to oust the Zayyānid Sultans. Around 911/1505, the Zayyānids forced al-Rashidī into exile.

Undeterred, al-Rashidī traveled throughout Eastern Algeria, Tunisia and Libya to establish numerous affiliated Sufi lodges. However, al-Rashidī was eventually captured by Zayyānid forces and died in prison in Tilimsān in 931/1524.

During his nearly four decades as an active Sufi teacher, al-Rashidī was one of the most sought-after Sufi guides for Moroccan students in the Eastern Tāfilālt and those performing the hajj pilgrimage. al-Rashidī’s Moroccan students formed three distinct traditions during the 10th/16th century. The first centered around Ibrāhīm Afḥām al-Zarhūnī (d. 926/1520), a direct student of Aḥmad Zarrūq. Based in Fez, al-Zarhūnī also departed from Zarrūq’s sharīʿa-based approach to advocate jadhī-based Sufism. Many of al-Rashidī’s Moroccan students sought out al-Zarhūnī as a master upon their return to Morocco. Among these was ʿAbd Allāh al-Khayyāṭ (939/1533) who established an influential zāwiya in nearby Zarhūn. Another influential jadhī-oriented Sufi of this tradition was ʿAbd al-Raḥman al-Majdhūb (d. 976/1564) who earned his nickname due

126 Najmī, al-Tasawwuf wa-l-Bidʿa, 100-103.
127 Najmī, al-Tasawwuf wa-l-Bidʿa, 103.
129 al-Zarhūnī and his student ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Ṣanhājī (d. 947/1560) helped to popularize jadhī-based Sufism in Morocco during this period. See Najmī, “al-Zarhūnī”, 4646.
to his reputation for being constantly immersed in ecstatic states (ahwāl). He was one of Morocco’s most popular religious figures in the 10th/16th century and traveled extensively throughout the country to preach, teach and call for jihād against the Portuguese and Spanish through his poetry.\footnote{Belmuqaddam cites examples of his “political” poetry in his article on al-Majdhub. See Belmuqaddam, “al-Majdhub”, 6985.}

al-Majdhub’s career also illustrates how al-Zarhūnī’s and al-Rāshidi’s pivot towards jadhb brought this current of the Zarrūqī tradition into close harmony with the Jazūliyya. One of his first teachers was ‘Abd Allāh al-Ghazwānī, the Jazūlī leader. He also studied with ’Umar al-Khaṭṭāb al-Zarhūnī, who led a prominent Jazūlī zāwiya in Zarhūn.\footnote{Aḥmad al-Wārith, “al-Khaṭṭāb, ’Umar,” in Ma’lamat al-Maghrib (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi’ Salā, 2000), v. 11, 3753-4.} al-Majdhub transmitted his Zarrūqī - Jazūlī synthesis to Abū Mahāsin al-Fāsī (d. 1013/1604).\footnote{al-Fāsī identified as both a Zarrūqī via al-Majdhub and as a Jazūlī via his father’s isnād to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Tabbā (d. 904/1499), the Jazūliyya’s second shaykh. al-Fāsī came from a renowned scholarly family in the northern Moroccan city of al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr. However, after displaying jadhb-oriented tendencies, he was forced to relocate to Fez. There, he maintained his status as a religious scholar practicing and transmitting the spiritual teachings of the Jazūliyya. Eventually, he established the Fāsiyya zāwiya in Fez, which continued to transmit Abū Mahāsin’s pioneering synthesis of Zarrūqī and Jazūlī Sufism into the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.} al-Majdhub was forced to leave his home of al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr after his spiritual awakening due to his preference for jadhb. See al-Dhabahī, “al-Fāsī”, v. 19, 6419.

\footnote{al-Fāsī was forced to leave his home of al-Qaṣr al-Kabīr after his spiritual awakening due to his preference for jadhb. See al-Dhabahī, “al-Fāsī”, v. 19, 6419.} Below, we discuss the career of ’Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī who was a contemporary of Ibn Nāṣir
The second current of Zarrūqī – Rāshidī Sufism in Morocco formed around Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Manzūlī (d. 10th/16th century). al-Manzūlī took al-Rāshidī’s questioning of taklīf to its extreme, teaching his followers that they were guaranteed paradise so they did not need to pray or fast.\textsuperscript{137} His community, which became known as the ʿAkākīza, also permitted adultery, the consumption of pork and carrion, and reportedly produced their own sacred text to replace the Qur’ān. They also viewed their non-ʿAkākīza Muslim neighbors as heretics, and freely attacked them and pillaged their property.\textsuperscript{138} As the ʿAkākīza grew into an increasingly disruptive force, Morocco’s religious leaders united in condemning them. In the early 10th/16th century, Muḥammad b. Ghāzī (d. 919/1513), Morocco’s leading hadīth scholar, persuaded the Waṭṭāsid Sultan Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Burtughālī to attack the ʿAkākīza. Later, the Sa’dī Sultan ʿAbd Allāh al-Ghālib (r. 956-982/1557-1574) launched a more extensive campaign against the ʿAkākīza that succeeded in limiting the ʿAkākīza’s influence through the use of force and by imprisoning and executing its leaders.\textsuperscript{139}

The third current of Zarrūqī – Rāshidī Sufism in Morocco took root in Sijilmāsa, a major Trans-Saharan trading hub in Morocco’s Tāfīlālt region, to the north of Wādī Darʿa. Sijilmāsa was home to Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī (d. 981-2/1574), a Sufi scholar who lived in Tabūbkārt, a village on the city’s outskirts. al-Ghāzī inherited the Zarrūqī – al-Rāshidī tradition through his teacher, ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Filālī (d. early 10th/16th

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\textsuperscript{137} Hajjī, \textit{al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya}, v. 1, 237-8.
\textsuperscript{138} Hajjī, \textit{al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya}, v. 1, 238.
\textsuperscript{139} Najmī, \textit{al-Tasawwuf wa al-Bidʿa}, 401-2.
century), who had studied with al-Rāshidī.\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, \textit{al-Durar al-Murassā'a}, v. 2, 485.} After al-Filālī’s death, al-Ghāzī began to teach a small community of students in his village’s communal mosque.\footnote{al-Ghāzī is quoted as saying that “love of this world is the root of every error.” See al-Ḥuḍaykī, \textit{Tabaqāt}, v. 1, 150. al-Ḥuḍaykī reports that al-Ghāzī housed and provided for these students in the Tabūbkart mosque.} al-Ghāzī’s teachings were not popular in Sijlmāsa. His biography repeatedly refers to his and his community’s social isolation, both by choice and as a result of their ostracization.\footnote{al-Ghāzī stated his preference for isolation (\textit{'uzla}) over excessive social interaction. See al-Ḥuḍaykī, \textit{Tabaqāt}, v. 1, 154.}

Descriptions of al-Ghāzī and his spiritual path display his balance between the \textit{sulāk} and \textit{jadhb} orientations of Zarrūq and al-Rāshidī. The 12th/18th century Nāṣirī historian Muḥammad al-Ḥuḍaykī quotes one of al-Ghāzī’s companions who describes his teacher as follows:

\begin{quote}
We’ve witnessed the quality of supreme sainthood (\textit{al-wilāya al-kubrā}) from our Sultan, Ṣīdī al-Ghāzī. As they say, there are saints who display kindness and mercy, and in whose kindess and mercy all of existence is enveloped. And then there are saints who display forceful power (\textit{qahr}), so you see them as if they are a lion or a monarch. That is so because if the Truth manifests some of His characteristics on His ally, then the wālī will display those characteristics, like the sun [shining] on a wall. Ṣīdī al-Ghāzī, may God be pleased with him, [lived] in both of these states. [Sometimes] you would see him as if he was a young, full-bodied man, his face luminous, shining like the full moon, radiant and pure like someone leaving the bathhouse. Other times you would see him as if he was an old, decrepit, weak-bodied man. This was due to the characteristics of God the Most High’s beauty and majesty, and might and power, that came over him [one after another].\footnote{al-Ḥuḍaykī, \textit{Tabaqāt}, v. 1, 149.}
\end{quote}

This passage expresses al-Ghāzī’s balanced engagement with both dimensions of God’s light: supremacy and majesty. This balance also revealed itself in his teaching. Rather than seeking to liberate his students from fear of God, al-Ghāzī maintained the necessary relationship between fearing and knowing God. He is reported to have said:
I fear God and we will continue to fear Him until we meet Him in a state of fear. This is because fearing God is based on one’s knowledge (ma‘rifa) of Him. Whoever knows God fears Him, and however does not know Him does not fear Him.

Like Zarrūq, al-Ghāzī placed an emphasis on reverence and aggrandizement as necessary conditions of the seeeker’s heart. Another passage attributed to al-Ghāzī emphasizes the need for God’s servants to prepare themselves to lead obedient lives through knowledge and reverence:

[al-Ghāzī], may God be pleased with him, used to say, ‘A man without a good horse, nor armor, a sword nor a spear is not righteous.’ He said, ‘The horse is knowledge, the armor is reverence (taqwa) of God. As God the Exalted says, “the clothing of taqwa.” The sword is patience and the spear is good deeds. Once [someone acquires these] then they can ride out to strive to properly respond to God (al-jihād fī ṣūrat Allāh).’

This passage demonstrates al-Ghāzī’s success in preserving and transmitting Zarrūq’s notion of reverent love while this concept became increasingly muddled in the other late-Zarrūqī communities in Fez, Zarhūn and among the ‘Akākiza.

Moroccan Sufism’s orientation towards jadhb began to shift in the mid-10th/16th century. At this time, Sa’dī support for the Jazūliyya began to erode. While the Sa’dī Sultans enjoyed the Jazūliyya’s support during their campaign for Morocco’s throne, they grew suspicious of the brotherhood after their rise to power. The first Sa’dī Sultan, Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Mahdī (d. 964/1557), shut Jazūlī members out of his administration and imposed taxes on many of the brotherhood’s lodges. He also attacked Jazūlī leaders in northern Morocco on the pretext that they maintained Waṭṭāsid sympathies. When Jazūlī leaders in the South resisted his taxes, al-Shaykh imprisoned

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144 al-Ḥuḍaykī, Ṭabaqāt, v. 1, 149.
145 al-Ḥuḍaykī, Ṭabaqāt, v. 1, 155.
146 Cornell, Realm of the Saint, 270.
many of them and seized their lodges’ property. Sultan ʿAbd Allāh al-Ghālib (d. 981/1574) continued to persecute the Jazūlīyya during his reign. One of his targets was shaykh ʿAbd Allāh al-Amghārī (d. 977/1566), the leader of a Jazūlī zāwiya in Tamṣlūḥṭ, in the High Atlas Mountains near to Marrakech. al-Amghārī traveled to Tamṣlūḥṭ at the direction of Jazūlī leader ʿAbd Allāh al-Ghazwānī. Settling in previously undeveloped territory, al-Amghārī succeeded in establishing a thriving zāwiya and commercial community. Essential to his success was al-Amghārī’s close relationship with the Ait ʿAṭā Berber confederation whose founder, Dādā ʿAṭā, was one of his adepts. al-Amghārī’s alliance with the Ait ʿAṭā and other tribes provided the shaykh with armed forces to protect his zāwiya from hostile tribes in its vicinity. However, al-Amghārī’s tribal allies also posed a threat to Saʿdī Sultan Abd Allah al-Ghālib. Consequently, al-Ghālib targeted al-Amghārī during his broader crackdown on dissident religious groups and forced the Jazūlī leader to abandon his zāwiya.148 As Saʿdī pressure on the Jazūlīyya intensified, Fez also witnessed a revival in Aḥmad Zarrūq’s reformism. During the 960s/1550s, the city twice played host to Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Kharrūbī (d. 963/1556), a second generation Zarrūqī Sufi and staunch sharī‘a-based reformist.149 During his time in Morocco he revived many of Zarrūq’s criticisms against the late-Jazūlīyya through his letters to Abu ʿAmr al-Qaṣṭalī (d. 974/1567), the Jazūlī leader in Marrakech. al-Kharrūbī decried the Jazūlīyya’s continued emphasis on jadhīb, inward spiritual states, and their focus on social issues and popular Sufism at the expense of sharī‘a norms.150

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147 Hajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 46.
150 ʿAbd Allāh Najmī, “al-Zarrūqīyya,” in Maʿlamat al-Maghrib (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi’ Salā,
The combination of al-Kharrūbī’s revival of Zarrūq’s reformism in Fez, new hostility from the Sa’dī state and the consensus condemnation of the ‘Akākiza appears to have shifted Moroccan Sufism back towards a sharī‘a-based approach during the last decades of the 10th/16th century. During this period, the Jazūlī scholar ‘Abd Allah al-Habṭī (d. 963/1555) led a reformist campaign to reduce the influence of local customs on religious practice in Northern Morocco’s Habṭ region.\(^{151}\) To begin, al-Habṭī composed a 1000-verse poem identifying inappropriate local customs in this region.\(^{152}\) He and his students then traveled from village to village, assessing residents’ religious knowledge and providing remedial education in Islamic law and theology. Cornell writes that al-Habṭī’s party only left a village once its leaders signed a contract, “swearing that they would forbid usury, encourage daily prayers and follow the Sunna.”\(^{153}\) al-Habṭī’s campaign enjoyed the support of Morocco’s religious elites, including the aforementioned Abū Maḥāsin al-Fāṣī. The shift towards sharī‘a and sunna oriented Sufism expanded during the second half of the 10th/16th century and early 11th/17th century. During this period, the preservation and transmission of normative religious teachings increasingly occurred within rural Sufī lodges rather than urban madāris.\(^{154}\)

\(^{151}\) Cornell, *Realm of the Saint*, 267.


\(^{154}\) Khaled El Rouayheb employs the term “efflorescence” to describe this period of cultural expansion. See *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century: Scholarly Currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147-152.
Sufism during the Maraboutic Crisis

Sa’di Sultan Aḥmad al-Manṣūr died suddenly from the plague in 1012/1603. Without a clear successor, al-Manṣūr’s sons turned on one another in pursuit of their father’s throne. As the Sa’di state faltered, several regional challengers emerged to challenge the Sa’di pretenders, plunging Morocco into a civil war that lasted nearly seven decades. Moroccan society would remain in a state of turmoil until 1078/1668 when Mawlay al-Raḥīd al-‘Alawī (d. 1083/1672) succeeded in unifying the country under his rule, establishing the ‘Alawī dynasty.155 The Sa’di – ‘Alawī interregnum is known as the Maraboutic Crisis or the age of the zāwiya princes (umārā’ al-zawāyā).156 Initially, this conflict was limited to al-Manṣūr’s sons and their supporters. Based in opposing camps in Fez and Marrakech, this internecine struggle broadened after 1016/1608 when Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Sa’dī (d. 1022/1613) offered the Moroccan port city of al-‘Arā’ish to Spain in return for assistance against his brother Zaydān al-Sa’dī (d. 1037/1627). Moroccans viewed Muḥammad al-Shaykh’s offer as a clear violation of the Sa’di dynasty’s commitment jihād. In response, a number of local leaders launched rebellions against al-Manṣūr’s sons, initiating the ‘zāwiya prince’ phase of conflict.

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156 We agree with Jacques Berque’s dating of the “Maraboutic Crisis” to the period between Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s death in 1012/1603 and Mawlay al-Raḥīd al-‘Alawī’s installation in Fez in 1078/1668. See Berque, Ulémas, 22.
The first 'zāwiya prince' was Aḥmad b. Abī Maḥallī (d. 1022/1613), a religious scholar and former Jazūlī Sufi.\(^{157}\) After Muḥammad al-Shaykh’s surrender of al-ʿArāʾiš, Ibn Abī Maḥallī came to view the Saʿdī dynasty as illegitimate.\(^{158}\) He began his revolt in Sijilmāsa, defeating a larger and better equipped Saʿdī garrison.\(^{159}\) Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s miraculous victories on the battlefield and manifest piety fueled rumors of his status as the mahdī, the ‘rightly-guided’ leader whom Muslims believed would appear at the end of time. Ibn Abī Maḥallī embraced this claim and quickly gained a sizable following.\(^{160}\) His forces swiftly defeated Saʿdī armies in Darʿa and Ibn Abī Maḥallī seized Zaydān al-Saʿdī’s capital of Marrakech in 1021/1612. However, this victory was shortlived. After taking the Saʿdī throne, Ibn Abī Maḥallī adopted the trappings of autocratic rule. As his reputation for uprightness and piety evaporated, so did his popular support. Zaydān succeeded in recruiting Yaḥya al-Ḥāḥī (d. 1035/1626), the leader of an influential Jazūlī zāwiya in the Sūs, to help restore Saʿdī rule in Marrakech. al-Ḥāḥī defeated and killed Ibn Abī Maḥallī in 1022/1613 and promptly handed control of Marrakech back to Zaydān. al-Ḥāḥī then retired to his zāwiya in the Sūs.\(^{161}\)

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\(^{157}\) Ibn Abī Maḥallī first studied Zarrūqī Sufism in Fez’s madrasat al-ʿAṭṭārīn before his extended companionship at the zāwiya of Muḥammad b. Mubārak al-Zaʿrī (d. 1016/1607). This experience led to his embrace of jadhb-oriented Jazūlī Sufism. However, this changed after his first hajj. Upon his return to Morocco, he became an outspoken critic of popular jadhb-oriented Sufism. See ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Qudūrī, Ibn Abī Maḥallī al-Faqīḥ al-Thāʾir wa-Riḥlatuḥu “al-Iṣlīl al-Khārīt” (Rabat: Manshūrāt Ṭūkāz, 1991), 64 and 80-2. For a chronicle of Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s involvement in the Maraboutic Crisis, see Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣīrī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣāʾ, v. 6, 26-33.

\(^{158}\) al-Qudūrī, Ibn Abī Maḥallī, 64-8.

\(^{159}\) Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣīrī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣāʾ, v. 6, 30.


\(^{161}\) Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣīrī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣāʾ, v. 6, 33.
In the midst of Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s occupation of Marrakech, a second zāwiya prince emerged to challenge Saʿdī rule. Abū Hassūn al-Samlālī (d. 1070/1659) was the leader of Ilīgh and an heir to the revered 10th/16th century Jazūlī Sufi Aḥmad b. Mūsā. al-Samlālī focused his energies on establishing an independent principality in Southern Morocco to take advantage of the Saʿdī dynasty’s neglect of the lucrative Trans-Saharan trade. After Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s defeat in Marrakech, al-Samlālī invited Yaḥya al-Ḥāḥī to join him in an uprising against Zaydān. However, al-Samlālī’s overtures only succeeded in causing al-Ḥāḥī to launch his own rebellion from the former Saʿdī capital of Tārūdānt. al-Ḥāḥī’s death in 1035/1625 allowed al-Samlālī to expand his influence across the Sūs region. After capturing Tārūdant, he shifted his attention to neighboring Wādī Dar’a. Saʿdī forces maintained control of Dar’a after Zaydān’s death in 1037/1627. al-Samlālī finally gained control of Dar’a in 1039/1629. He then proceeded to seize the Tāfīlalt. al-Samlālī’s rule along Morocco’s Saharan frontier went unchallenged for over a decade.

Meanwhile, in Morocco’s Gharb, fighting continued between forces loyal to Muḥammad al-Shaykh’s sons, Arab tribes and al-Mujāhid al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 1051/1641), a Jazūlī Sufi and military commander who launched several successful jihād campaigns against the Spanish along Morocco’s Atlantic coast. This political landscape began to

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164 Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Iṣtiqāṣ, v. 6, 68.


shift after Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dīlāʾī’s death in 1046/1636 year. The leader of the renowned Dīlāʾīyya ṣāhiyya, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr presided over his lodge’s growth as an apolitical spiritual and intellectual center that sheltered scholars and students looking to escape the Maraboutic Crisis’s turmoil.167 His son and successor, Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dīlāʾī (d. 1082/1671), used the Dīlāʾīyya ṣāhiyya’s resources and influence to bolster his own campaign for Morocco’s throne. Shortly after his father’s death, he launched a campaign to capture Sa’dī-controlled Fes in 1048/1638. After defeating the last Sa’dī leader, al-Dīlāʾī directed his forces against al-ʿAyyāshī, whom he promptly dispatched.168 al-Dīlāʾī then turned his attention to the Tāfilalt, where the ‘Alawī family of shūrafāʾ had launched a rebellion against Abū al-Ḥassān al-Samlālī’s allies. By 1050/1640, the ‘Alawī leader Mawlay Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf (d. 1074/1664) seized control of the Tafilt and Dar’a from al-Samlālī. That same year, Mawlay Muḥammad signed a truce with Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dīlāʾī that recognized ‘Alawī rule in Dar’a and Tafilt and Dīlāʾī rule in the Gharb.169 After this, Mawlay Muḥammad and his successor, Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī (d. 1082/1672), never lost their control of the Saharan frontier.170

167 For a detailed study of the Dīlāʾīyya ṣāhiyya’s history, see Muḥammad Ḥajjī, al-Zāwiyya al-Dīlāʾīyya wa-Dawruhā al-Dīnī wa-l Ilmī wa-l-Siyāsī, 2nd ed. (Casablanca: Maṭba‘at al-Najāḥ al-Jāfidah, 1988)


Fighting resumed between the two sides a decade later after Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilā’ī earned the bayʿa of Fez’s elites in 1061/1651 and assumed the title of Morocco’s Sultan. However, the ‘Alawī family used their shurafāʾ status and success on the battlefield to erode al-Dilā’ī’s support, especially among Morocco’s Arab tribes. al-Dilā’ī’s rule came to a sudden end with Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī’s conquest of Fez and destruction of the Dilāʾīyya zāwīya in 1078-9/1668. This marked the end of the Maraboutic Crisis and the beginning of the ‘Alawī dynasty.¹⁷¹

Writing in the decades after the ‘Alawī victory, historian Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Ifrānī remarked that the Maraboutic Crisis’s warring factions had divided Morocco, “as though they were the Party Kings.”¹⁷² Prolonged and intense political instability led to the deterioration of Moroccan society and economic life. In the absence of a clear Sultan, banditry and tribal raiding increased, stifling the movement of goods and people on Morocco’s byways. Craft industries suffered from a lack of raw materials while other industries, such as sugar production, were hurt by foreign imports.¹⁷³ The Saʿdī state’s weakness also precipitated the decline of the Trans-Saharan gold trade.¹⁷⁴ Socio-political instability was further exacerbated by periodic bouts of plague as well as droughts and famine.¹⁷⁵ This led to a severe depopulation of the Moroccan countryside. The author of Taʿrīkh al-Dawlah al-Saʿdiyya al-Tāgmādartiyya (The History of the Saʿdī State in

¹⁷⁴ al-Darʿī, Ḡanīmat al-ʿAbd, 23-4.
¹⁷⁵ al-Darʿī, Ḡanīmat al-ʿAbd, 26.
Tāgmandart) describes this period with these words: “Corruption was widespread to the extent that a man could be sitting at home and then be set upon by brigands who could order him to vacate his home, and seize all that he had. [They] could also demand that he pay jizya\textsuperscript{176} or give them food so that they wouldn’t destroy or raze his home.”\textsuperscript{177}

While the motives behind the Maraboutic Crisis were mainly political, religion played a key role in defining the terms of this conflict. The duty of upholding jihād served as a central motive behind revolutionary politics after Muḥammad al-Shaykh’s surrender of al-‘Arā’ish. Ibn Abī Maḥallī justified his campaign by arguing the Saʿdī family’s abandonment of jihād de legitimized their dynasty. al-Mujāhid al-‘Ayyāshī began his career as a mujāhid with no interest in the struggle for Morocco’s throne. Yet he was unable to escape the snare of political intrigues; even a true mujāhid posed a threat to more politically-minded actors like Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilāʾī. Additionally, all of the main actors in this crisis, with the exception of members of the Saʿdī and ‘Alawī families, were somehow affiliated with the Jazūliyya brotherhood. Ibn Abī Maḥallī had trained under the Jazūlī shaykh al-Zaʿirī and al-Mujāhid al-‘Ayyāshī initiated his jihād in the Gharb at the direction of his shaykh, Ibn Hassūn al-Salāsī (d. 1604/1013).\textsuperscript{178} Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilāʾī, Abū al-Ḥassūn al-Samlālī and Yahya al-Ḥāḥī all led Jazūlī affiliated zāwiyyas. While each of these actors had different motives, it seems likely that the Jazūliyya’s spirit of socially conscious mysticism and jihād

\textsuperscript{176} The poll-tax, usually reserved for protected non-Muslim populations to be paid to the Sultan.


\textsuperscript{178} Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqsāʾ, v. 6, 24.
encouraged their politics. Perhaps, for this reason, early 'Alawī Sultans took decisive action to reduce the Jazuliyya’s influence in Morocco after establishing their dynasty.

The rise of Maraboutic leaders in Moroccan politics during the ‘Alawī–Sa’di interregnum also indicates a broader crisis of authority within Moroccan Sufism. Social and political disunity disrupted Moroccan Sufism’s reorientation towards a shari’a-based approach. In the absence of an agreed-upon Sultan and a unified religious discourse, jadhba-oriented Sufism began to thrive unchecked. During this period, the ‘Akākīza reemerged as a powerful force in Morocco’s Middle Atlas Mountains. Likewise, the number of spiritual leaders who claimed miraculous powers and access to esoteric knowledge multiplied. In al-Muḥadarat, al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī tells the story of a pseudo-pious man who came to Sijilmāsa during the days of Mawlay Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf. This man claimed to travel to and from Mecca in a day. As his following grew, the ‘Alawī shūrafā’ decided to test him. One day, one of them came to the man to complain of the burden of performing Islam’s five obligatory daily prayers. He offered the pseudo-pious man 50 gold pieces if he could “lift” away the obligation of prayer. The man accepted the money and was promptly ambushed by a group of shurafā’ who were

179 The Nāṣiri scholar Aḥmad al-Ḥashtūkī describes the ‘Akākīza’s reemergence in the Middle Atlas regions of Jabal Fazāż and Tādlā. He writes that once Mawlay al-Rashīd al-‘Alawī established himself as Sultan, there was a big debate about how to respond to the ‘Akākīza. Ultimately, Mawlay al-Rashīd chose to consider them as apostates and gave them the chance to repent. This policy contrasted with the opinion of Nāṣiri scholars al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī and ‘Abd al-Mālik al-Tajmū afī who considered the ‘Akākīza to be atheists (zanādiqa) who deserved to be violently suppressed. al-Ḥashtūkī relates al-Yūsī’s and al-Tajmū afī’s legal opinions on the ‘Akākīza in their entirety in his first riḥla narrative. See Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Jazūlī al-Ḥashtūkī, “Hadiyat al-Malik al-‘Allām ilā Ḥajj Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām wa-l-Wuqūf bi-l-Mashā’ir al-Iṣām wa Ziyārat al-Nabī alayhi al-Salāt wa-l-Salām” (n.d.), 190-3, Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc, 83-6. Najmī summarizes these debates in al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid‘a, 405-22.
hiding close by."\(^{180}\) al-Yūsī warns “how many people appear to be good when they have no good in them.”\(^{181}\) He tells his reader, “caution is necessary, especially during our time which is the last of days and in which corruption has overtaken righteousness.”\(^{182}\)

al-Yūsī’s eschatological sentiments were shared by many Moroccans who saw the Maraboutic Crisis as a major sign of the end of times. As al-Yūsī writes, this environment nurtured the love of leadership (riyāsa) in people who sought to rectify the ills of Moroccan society. He writes, “Many ignorant people in our time complain of oppression (al-jūr) and demand justice. Yet they do not realize that the time of oppression passed with the kings [of old] whereas justice ended with the [rightly-guided] Caliphs. Now, only corruption remains.”\(^{183}\) The career of Yaḥya b. Yaḥya al-Ḥāḥī was viewed in such a light. al-Ḥāḥī was a jurist and leader of a well-respected zāwiya in the Sūs. He only entered the Maraboutic Crisis at the request of Zaydān al-Saʿdī after Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s conquest of Marrakech. After defeating Ibn Abī Maḥallī, al-Ḥāḥī left Marrakech to Zaydān before retiring to his zāwiya. However, as one Moroccan chronicler wroter, al-Ḥāḥī’s taste of politics “spoiled his well.”\(^{184}\) Not long after his return to the Sūs, al-Ḥāḥī sent a letter to Zaydān complaining of his treatment of the Arab tribes of the Gharb and calling the Saʿdī leader to righteous leadership.\(^{185}\) In response, Zaydan warned his former ally of the consequences of leading an uprising against the Sultan and reminded him that

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\(^{183}\) al-Yūsī, al-Muhādarāt, v. 1, 270-1.

\(^{184}\) Ahmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqsā’, v. 6, 35.

love of the Prophet Muḥammad required the reverence for his descendants.\textsuperscript{186} He then proceeded to dismiss al-Ḥāhī’s complaints.\textsuperscript{187}

al-Ḥāhī bore with Zaydān until Abū Hassūn al-Samlālī’s rebellion demonstrated that the Sa’di ruler was a Sultan in name only. In 1024/1614, al-Ḥāhī captured Tārudānt from al-Samlālī. He adopted the city as his capital and a base for campaigns against Zaydān’s forces in Dar’a. Shortly thereafter, Tārudānt’s chief judge Abū Bakr al-Sugtānī wrote to al-Ḥāhī to condemn his rebellion. al-Sugtānī begins his missive by describing the Maraboutic Ciris as a consequence of “Satan’s toying” with people’s intellect, leading them on paths of destruction in the pursuit of worldly power.\textsuperscript{188} He exhorts al-Ḥāhī to cease his rebellion, reminding him of the example of the second generation of Muslims \textit{(al-tābiʿīn)} who chose to preserve their religion through worship rather than revolt against the tyrannical al-Ḫujjāj b. Yūsuf.\textsuperscript{189} al-Sugtānī then brings up the example of Ibn Abī Maḥallī as a cautionary tell. He writes that Ibn Abī Maḥallī had a good reputation, with some people considering him the axial saint \textit{(quṭb)} of his age. However, his prominence corrupted him:

\begin{quote}
This state took [Ibn Abī Maḥallī] to the point where either he or his \textit{nafs} justified to himself that it was permissible for him to do what was impermissible for other people of his age to do. So he launched his rebellion with the support of others, and he filled this world with shouts, calls, clamor and lies that no rational argument or transmitted text could justify. He rebelled against fellow Muslims… killing, stealing, cursing and defaming. He burdened his \textit{nafs} beyond its capacity, so that the devilish people, \textit{jinn}, the \textit{nafs} and his passion enchanted him [to do wrong].\textsuperscript{190}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{186} ʿAḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣiri, \textit{Kitāb al-Istiqsāʾ}, v. 6, 39.
\textsuperscript{188} ʿAḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣiri, \textit{Kitāb al-Istiqsāʾ}, v. 6, 61.
\textsuperscript{190} ʿAḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣiri, \textit{Kitāb al-Istiqsāʾ}, v. 6, 62.
al-Sugtānī writes that people like Ibn Abī Mahallī should not be dismissed as irrational actors. Rather, he directly ties their emergence to the loss of religious knowledge and scholarship during this tumultuous period. In conclusion, al-Sugtānī calls al-Ḥāhidī to be fearful of God’s questioning of his actions and to have taqwā.

E. The Zāwiya Fluorescence

al-Sugtānī was not alone in viewing the Maraboutic Crisis as a spiritual emergency. By the early decades of the 11th/17th century, an increasing number of Moroccan scholars identified the revival of sunnī piety and sulṭāk-oriented Sufism as the remedy for their country’s plight. Among them was ’Abd al-Wāḥid b. Ṭāshir (d. 1042/1631), a prominent jurist and Jazūlī Sufi from Fez. A participant in al-Mujāhid al-‘Ayyāshī’s jiḥād campaigns in the Gharb, Ibn Ṭāshir contributed to sulṭāk-oriented Sufism’s revival in Fez through his didactic poem al-Murshid al-Mu’īn. This text outlined the fundamental principles of Ash’ārī theology, Mālikī law and the Sufism of Junayd al-Baghdādī, whom Ibn Ṭāshir labels “the sālik.” Ibn Ṭāshir’s text was popular in Fez’s study circles and garnered two commentaries by Muḥammad b. Ahmad Mayyāra. However, it’s unclear how widely this text circulated outside of Fez or its impact on Morocco’s religious discourse during the Maraboutic Crisis.

191 Ahmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqṣā’, v. 6, 63.
194 al-Husainī, The Practical Guidebook, 211.
195 Prior to Ibn Ṭāshir’s death, Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī composed his own poem outlining the foundations of Mālikī ritual law, which spread widely in the Sūs, Darʿa and Tafilālt.
Outside of Ibn ʿĀshir’s students and colleagues in Fez, sharīʿa-oriented Sufism also found sanctuary in a number of Morocco’s Sufi lodges. While some ṣāwiya leaders used the Maraboutic Crisis to their political advantage, others saw this turbulent period as an opportunity to preserve and nurture Morocco’s religious traditions. Historian ʿAbdallah Laroui writes that, despite the political instability of this period, Morocco experienced an unprecedented “movement of ‘culturation’” led, in large part, by Sufi lodges: “After a profound decadence in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Moslem culture spread through the whole country, even by means of the small rural schools and the ṣāwiyas, to the mountain regions.”

The 18th century Moroccan historian Muḥammad al-Qādirī made note of this ṣāwiya-led “efflorescence” in his chronicle Nashr al-Mathānī:

It was common for people to say, ‘Were it not for three [people], knowledge (al-ʿilm) would have been lost in Morocco in the 11th century [A.H./17th century C.E.] due to the widespread civil disorder that occurred during it. Those three are Sīdi Muḥammad b. Nāṣir in the Darʿa Valley, Sīdi Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr in Dilāʾ, and Sīdi Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Fāsī in Fās.

al-Qādirī includes Ibn Nāṣir in the company of two ṣāwiya leaders from Morocco’s Gharb. The first, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dilāʾī (d. 1046/1637), the father of the aforementioned Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilāʾī, had grown up in the Dilāʾiyya ṣāwiya and studied under his father, the ṣāwiya’s founder. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was initiated

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196 Laroui, The History of the Maghrib, 260.
197 Abu Nasr, A History of the Maghrib, 147-152.
199 Ḥājjī, al-Zāwiya al-Dilāʾiyya, 45.
200 Ḥājjī, al-Zāwiya al-Dilāʾiyya, 80.
into the Jazūlī Sufi brotherhood first by his father and later by the aforementioned Abū Mahāsin al-Fāsī. al-Dilā’ī also distinguished himself as a religious scholar who excelled in the disciplines of hadīth and Quranic exegesis (tafsīr). After completing his studies and performing the hajj pilgrimage, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr returned to the Dilā’iyya zāwiya to teach. He succeeded his father as the zāwiya’s leader in 1020/1612. During his tenure, the Dilā’iyya zāwiya served as a refuge for students and scholars from the Maraboutic Crisis. 201 This was especially true for members of Fez’s scholar community who frequented the Dilā’iyya zāwiya during this period. 202

‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī (d. 1091/1680) was a generation younger than Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dilā’ī. 203 A descendant of Abū Maḥāsin al-Fāsī, ‘Abd al-Qādir inherited his father’s position as the leader of the Fāsiyya zāwiya in Fez’s Qalqaḥīn neighborhood. He maintained his zāwiya’s role as a center for Jazūlī Sufi practice while also developing its reputation as a center for Islamic scholarship. 204 Like al-Dilā’ī, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī was renowned for his command of Islam’s rational and transmitted sciences, especially hadīth. He held a high isnād for Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, which he taught on an annual basis, along with Saḥīḥ Muslim. 205 By virtue of their common connection to Abū Maḥāsin al-Fāsī, the Fāsiyya and Dilā’iyya lodges maintained a close relationship during the Maraboutic Crisis. After Mawlay al-Rashīd al-‘Alawī destroyed the Dilā’iyya zāwiya in

201 Hajjī, al-Zāwiya al-Dilā’īyya, 80-83.
203 al-Dhababī, al-Zāwiya al-Fāsiyya, 205.
204 al-Dhababī, al-Zāwiya al-Fāsiyya, 205-207
1078/1668, many of its scholars and students sought refuge in 'Abd al-Qādir’s zāwiya in Fez before their deportation to Tlemcen.\textsuperscript{206}


[Ibn Abī Maḥallī] was among those afflicated recently by the Fātimid call [to be the mahdī]. He went far along the spiritual path and attained some [esoteric knowledge]. He wrote a book which demonstrated that. Then this evil insinuation afflicted him. They’ve told us that in the beginning of his career he stayed with Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dilāʾī. At that time, bad deeds (manākir) had increased and spread throughout the country. One night, Ibn Abī Maḥallī asked Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dilāʾī, “Are you interested in going out tomorrow to command people to do good and condemn bad deeds?” [Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr] did not support him because he saw the corruption and evil of that time to have reach such a height as to be beyond rectification. When they awoke the next day, both men went out. As for Ibn Abī Bakr, he set out for the river where he washed his clothes and shaved. Then, he performed his obligatory prayers and his litanies at their times. As for Ibn Abī Maḥallī, he set out to rectify what was bothering him, but he fell into evil and disputation that led him to miss performing his prayer on time. Nor did he accomplish anything. When the men gathered together at night, Ibn Abī Bakr said to him, “As for me, I took care of my business for the day, preserved my religious practice and returned for the night well and clean. Whoever does a bad deed, God will take care of them” – or something similar – “As for you, look at what you fell into.” It wasn’t long afterward that [Ibn Abī Maḥallī] went to [the East] and began calling to himself, claimed to be the Awaited Mahdī, and claimed to be upholding jihād. He deceived the hearts of the common people and they followed him.\textsuperscript{207}

\textsuperscript{206} Hajjī, \textit{al-Zāwiya al-Dilāʾīyya}, 67-8.

The Nāṣiriyya’s Emergence in Wādi Dar’a (1050s/1640s)

The Maraboutic Crisis brought the peace and prosperity of the Sa’dī era to a swift end in Wādi Dar’a. The Sa’dī military and administrative infrastructure in the valley did not survive the campaigns of Ibn Abī Maḥallī and Yahya al-Ḥāhī against Mawlay Zaydān in the 1610s and 1620s.208 While Abū Hassūn al-Samlālī’s occupation of Dar’a in 1629/1030 brought an end to active hostilities in the valley, he ruled harshly and imposed stiff taxes on his subjects.209 Despite his heavy hand, al-Samlālī was nonetheless unable to secure Dar’a from pastoral raiders. An ethnic Berber, al-Samlālī sought to exclude Arab Saharan tribes from the Trans-Saharan trade. These tribes took their revenge by raiding Dar’a’s residents, especially in areas that supported al-Samlālī’s rule.210 Dar’a once again plunged into conflict in the 1050s/1640s with Mawlay Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf’s invasion of the valley. Clashes between ‘Alawī and Samlālī forces continued for the next decade.211 These battles inflicted many casualties and resulted in the destruction of markets, palm orchards and other property vital to Dar’a’s economic life.212 Additionally, this conflict divided the valley’s residents. al-Būzaydī writes that members of Dar’a’s religious elite, especially leaders of the valley’s Sufī lodges, as well as the residents of the Mezguita oasis, supported the ‘Alawīs. On the other hand, residents in the Ternata and Fezouata oases supported al-Samlālī. After finally defeating al-Samlālī in

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The period of 1060/1650 witnessed the exile of members of these oases’ notable families to Sijilmāsa, where they were put to death.⁵¹³

Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī, the Nāṣiriyya’s founder, grew up in the midst of this sociopolitical and religious turmoil. He was born on the eve of the Maraboutic Crisis in Ramadan 1602/1011, in Aghlān, a village in Wādī Darʿa’s centrally located Ternāṭa Oasis. As a young boy, he memorized the Qur’ān under the supervision of his father, an educated businessman of moderate means. When he was old enough, Ibn Nāṣir started working to support his father’s business.⁵¹⁴ Around this time, Ibn Nāṣir began studying Islamic law and Arabic with ‘Alī b. Yūsuf al-Darʿī (d.c. 10th/16th century), a scholar based out of zāwiya Sayyid al-Nāṣ in nearby Tamgrūt.⁵¹⁵ Though their studies were intermittent, Ibn Nāṣir succeeded in mastering the fundamental Islamic sciences under al-Darʿī’s guidance.⁵¹⁶ As a young man, Ibn Nāṣir was contracted to teach elementary school in Jorfa, a village in the Nāṣirī family’s ancestral home of Dādas, on the Southern slopes of the High Atlas Mountains.⁵¹⁷ During this period, he studied with ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Dādasī (d. 1094/1693).⁵¹⁸ However, after a short while Ibn Nāṣir’s father called him back to Aghlān. By virtue of his education and piety, Ibn Nāṣir earned a position as the prayer leader (imam) and sermonizer (khaṭīb) in Aghlān’s congregational

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⁵¹³ al-Būzaydī, al-Taʾrīkh al-Ijtīmāʾī, 96.
⁵¹⁶ ‘Alī b. Yūsuf’s position in zāwiyat Sayyid al-Nāṣ did not provide him with the means to provide for his family, so he was often busy working as a craftsman. One of Ibn Nāṣir’s more advanced classmates took to writing out lessons from Mukhtasar Khalīl for the younger pupil to review independently and then present to his teacher when he was able. See al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar, v. 2, 514.
mosque. His father also employed him to interface with Dar’a’s new ruler, Abū Hassūn al-Samlālī. Though this new life offered opportunities to teach and social prominence, Ibn Nāṣir remained unsatisfied. It was not long before he began to search for a spiritual guide (shaykh al-tarbiya) to complete his personal and religious formation.

At the beginning of his quest, Ibn Nāṣir committed himself to following a guide whose spirituality closely followed the Prophetic sunna. This put him at odds with the prevailing Jazūlī and Qādirī traditions which were more closely oriented towards jadhb-based Sufism. For example, the local Jazūlī Sufi Ābd al-Wāḥid al-Drāwī (d. 1032/1022) was known to practice alchemy (al-kīmiyāʾ). He reportedly used this ability to miraculously escape imprisonment by Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Maṣūr during the Maraboutic Crisis.219 Similarly, Ābd al-ʿAzīz al-Zamrānī (d. 1071/1060) was an extreme ascetic who fled to Dar’a after abandoning his family and property for the sake of worshipping God.220 Lastly, Masʿūd b. Muḥammad al-Fīlālī al-Darʿī (d.c. 10th/16th century) was a companion of the aforementioned Abū Maḥāsin al-Fāsī:

[al-Darʿī] possessed tremendous states and was lost in the Prophet, peace be upon him. He never used to pause from praising the Prophet, peace be upon him […] He used to say that when night fell he would sit on the edge of a wall so that sleep would not overtake him and cause him to cease praising the Prophet, peace be upon him. One day he was in a great state and he was saying, “Here is God’s Messenger! Here is God’s Messenger!” He was running and shouting until he went into shaykh Abū Maḥāsin [al-Fāsī’s] home, where he was with his wife and children. [Abū Maḥāsin] did not ask them to cover themselves when [al-Darʿī] entered. [al-Darʿī] remained in this state, running, shouting and saying these words […] until he fell to the ground crying. Once he began to cry, the shaykh told his wife to leave and ask her to cover herself. Later on [Abū Maḥāsin] was asked about this episode, and he said, “[al-Darʿī] was cut off from his senses, but once he began to cry, he had returned to his senses.”221

Ibn Nāṣir struggled to find a sunna-centric spiritual teacher within this environment. Just as he was about to give up on his quest, his cousin told him about Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī (d. 1052/1642)\(^{222}\) and ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥusayn al-Raqqī (d. 1045/1635).\(^{223}\) Both were Sufi masters of the Zarrūqī-Ghāzī tradition who lived and taught in the zāwiya in Tamgrūt established by ‘Umar al-Anṣārī at the end of the 10\(^{th}\)/16\(^{th}\) century. Ibn Nāṣir’s biographers write that, once he heard of al-Raqqī and al-Anṣārī, he set out immediately to meet them:

\[\text{[Ibn Nāṣir] met both of them as they were finishing their Maghrib prayers. Once they had said their final taslīm, both men began to recite, “The is no God but Allāh, Alone, He has no partner, He possess the Dominion and possess all Praise, He gives life and gives death, and He has power over all things.” [When he heard this], [Ibn Nāṣir] said to himself, ‘This is the sunna of God’s Messenger!’ Thus, both men, their pleasing state and their adherence to the Muḥammadan sharīʿa pleased him. [Ibn Nāṣir] then said to […] Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm, may Allah benefit us through him, ‘I would like you to take me to the shaykh [al-Raqqī] so that he can induct me into the Shādhīlī litany.’ [al-Anṣārī] responded, ‘Ask God the Most High to choose for you in this matter.’ [Ibn Nāṣir] said to himself, ‘This is another sign of their adherence to the sunna, because the Prophet used to teach his companions how to ask God to choose for them in their affairs and he commanded them to do so.’ [Ibn Nāṣir] said to al-Anṣārī, ‘I’ve already sought God to choose for me in this matter.’ So, al-Anṣārī took Ibn Nāṣir to the shaykh, Sīdī ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥusayn, and he inducted [Ibn Nāṣir] into his dhikr. Both men pleased [Ibn Nāṣir] and he pleased them, and they asked him to be their companion and to live with them, and also to teach and spread knowledge in their zāwiya.\(^{224}\)]\]

The three men’s meeting proved to be auspicious. For the next twelve years, Ibn Nāṣir served as the lead scholar (faqīh) at his teachers’ zāwiya while he undertook spiritual training as their disciple. al-Raqqī died in 1045/1635 and Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm was killed by

\(^{222}\) al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar, v. 1, 112-7
\(^{223}\) al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar, v. 1, 362-83
tribal leaders later in 1052/1642. Now, without a guide, Ibn Nāṣir left Tamgrūt for his home in Aghlān. However, this absence lasted only two years. In 1054/1644, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir returned to his teachers’ zāwiya in Tamgrūt and assumed their spiritual mantle. Now a shaykh, Ibn Nāṣir strove to expand his teachers’ lodge into a center of spiritual practice and religious scholarship.

A. Ibn Nāṣir’s Sufi Lineage

Through al-Raqqī and al-Anṣārī, Ibn Nāṣir inherited Aḥmad Zarrūq’s spiritual tradition, as transmitted via al-Rāshidī and Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī. Early Nāṣirī works clearly identify Ibn Nāṣir and his companions as Zarrūq’s heirs. In his poem Masarrat al-Ikhwān, Ibn Nāṣir’s student Abū Bakr al-Tarakuntī identifies the Nāṣirīyya path as follows:

[This poem] documents the Nāṣirī chain of transmission / of our masters, the axial saints. It is Ghāziyya --

I mean, Zarrūqiyya, the people of God / the Shādhiliyya, who have an awesome station

This identity remained strong in succeeding generations. In his ḥajj diary, Ibn Nāṣir’s son Aḥmad al-Khalīfa writes that he asked God to “affirm our affiliation” with Aḥmad Zarrūq when he visited his tomb in 1121/1711. Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and later Nāṣirīs also revered al-Ghāzī as the progenitor of their spiritual path. When people referred to

\[225\] Ibn Nāṣir was not given permission by his teacher’s to transmit their spiritual tradition, and so he did not immediately step in as the Tamgrūt zāwiya’s leader after al-Anṣārī’s death. Rather, he returned to Aghlān where he resumed his previous duties. After two years, he fell ill and was immobilized. He then saw al-Raqqī in a dream, who healed him and gave him permission to transmit his spiritual tradition. See al-Makkī al-Nāṣiri, al-Durar, v. 2, 521-3

\[226\] al-Makkī al-Nāṣiri, al-Durar, v. 1, 369

\[227\] See discussion in Chapter 4
him as “shaykh”, Ibn Nāṣir was known to say, “I am not a shaykh, our shaykh is Sīdī al-Ghāzī”. In his commentary of one of Ibn Nāṣir’s devotional poems, the third generation Nāṣirī scholar al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī (d. 1140/1728) writes, “without a doubt [al-Ghāzī] was the mightiest and [most] venerable leader of [our] path… he is the leader of the Nāṣirī community (huwa imām al-Ṭāʾifā al-Nāṣirīyya) which ascribes itself to him… as does the Shadhilī brotherhood itself.”

**Figure 1.2:** Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s sanad in the Shādhilīyya Brotherhood

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Aḥmad Zarrūq (d. 899/1493)

Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Rāshidī (d. 931/1524)

ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Fīlālī (d.c. 10/16 century)

Abū al-Qāsim Ghāzī (d. 981/1573-4)

Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Darʿī (d. 998/1590)

ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥusayn al-Raqqī (d. 1045/1635)

Mahammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī (d. 1102/1691)
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228 ‘Amālik, Jawānib, v. 1, 229. Here, he is quoting from al-Wallālī’s Ḍabāḥih al-Anwār.


A Path of Reverent Love: Naṣirī Practice and Discourse

In addition to their genealogical bond, early Naṣirī sources clearly demonstrate Zarrūq’s influence on the Naṣirīyya’s discursive tradition. Ibn Naṣir cites Zarrūq several times in his collection of legal and spiritual responsa, *al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya*. The compiler of this work also includes two long letters by Zarrūq among a collection of Ibn Naṣīr’s letters to adepts.231 Similarly, Maḥammad b. Naṣir incorporates a distinctively Zarrūqī discourse into his counsels to adepts. He wrote this brief missive to one of his students:

I urge you to revere God the Magnificent. Be wary of your soul (*nafs*) and do not lower your guard against its evil, even if [your soul] appears to be at peace. Do not turn to or fear [anything] other than God. Do not raise any of your worldly or otherworldly needs to [anyone] other than God. Do not worry about your provision. Keep your tongue moist with God’s remembrance. Be sure to pass all of your breaths in obedience of God. Do not view yourself to be better than any of God’s Creation, rather consider yourself to be among the dead. When you awake, do not look forward to the night, and when you turn in for the night, do not look forward to the morning. Have patience, and your patience is only through God. Do not despair of God’s mercy. Do not feel safe from God’s plan. Renew your repentance and turning to God every hour. Fill your heart with mercy for God’s Creation. Soften your manners and beautify your character towards God’s servants. Fill your heart with happiness regarding God’s bounty (*faḍl*). Indeed, we seek help from God and trust in Him.232

Ibn Naṣir’s son and successor Aḥmad al-Khalīfa (d. 1129/1717) directly incorporated passages from Zarrūq’s work *Uṣūl al-Ṭarīqa* in his correspondence with Naṣirī adepts during the the late 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. Here is the opening passage from *Uṣūl al-Ṭarīqa*:

The foundations of our path are five: to revere God inwardly and outwardly, to follow the *sunna* in words and deeds, to be detached from Creation regardless of

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whether they accept or reject [us], to be pleased with God in times of poverty and prosperity, to return to Him in good times and bad times.\textsuperscript{233}

Here are al-Khalīfa’s introductory counsels to the Nāṣirī community in Asafī:

I advise you to revere God inwardly and outwardly, to return to God in all matters, whether far or near; to follow the sunna in words and deeds, to be pleased with God in times of prosperity and poverty, to seek closeness to God in sweet and bitter times, to detach yourselves from Creation, whether they accept or reject you…\textsuperscript{234}

This formula is repeated in nearly all of al-Khalīfa’s letters. \textit{Uṣūl al-Ṭariqa} was so important to al-Khalīfa’s expression of the Nāṣirīyya path that, in one letter, he admonishes his audience to “read \textit{Uṣūl al-Ṭariqa} everyday until it becomes ingrained in your souls.”\textsuperscript{235} However, the strongest evidence for the close link between the Nāṣirīyya and Zarrūq’s Sufi tradition is in Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s adoption of reverent love as the foundation of their community’s discourse and practices.

A. Reverent Love and Nāṣirī Spiritual Practice

Ibn Nāṣir and his students viewed love as the basis of their spiritual practice and community. The Nāṣirī community was first known simply as “the people of love” (\textit{ahl al-mahabba}).\textsuperscript{236} \textit{Al-Awjiba al-Nāṣiriyya} opens with Ibn Nāṣir’s definitions of faith (\textit{imān}), self-submission (\textit{islām}) and their perfection (\textit{al-kamāl al-ḥasan}).\textsuperscript{237} He defines self-submission as the surrender to and response to God’s commandments prohibitions.\textsuperscript{238} He states the seeker should cultivate their state of self-submission by seeking

\textsuperscript{234} “Nāṣirī Letters,” 6.
\textsuperscript{235} “Nāṣirī Letters,” 92.
\textsuperscript{236} We discuss this term and its relationship to the Nāṣirī community in the following chapter.
knowledge. The attainment of this state is contingent on their adherence to the hadīth, “The Muslim is one who spares people [the harm] of their tongue, their hands and their [lust].” Next, Ibn Nāṣir defines faith as conviction (taṣdīq). This is cultivated through observation and reflection on the created world. He then states that one’s faith is contingent on having reverence (taqwā). The perfection of faith is achieved by fulfilling the hadīth, “None you will attain to faith until they love for their Muslim brother what they love for their self.” Love, then, describes the force that compels a person to submit to God and drives them to give selflessly to those around them. This faithful love also influenced the Nāṣirīyya’s relationship with other Sufi brotherhoods. Ibn Nāṣir prohibited his students from following other saints, stating that the Shādhilī brotherhood is “jealous” of its adepts following multiple guides. Rather, Ibn Nāṣir defines the Nāṣirī path as one of “sincerity (al-nusūḥ)” and not “cheating and deception.”

Nāṣirī reverent love required the seeker to fulfill God’s commandments and prohibitions. Ibn Nāṣir defined the qualities of a sincere seeker (murūd) as “a body that is free from disobeying God, a tongue that is moist with God’s remembrance, constant contemplation of the inner dominion (malakūt), a spirit enthralled by God’s majesty, a heart illuminated by God’s lights.” Later, he states, “The faqīr is not someone who wears rough-looking clothes… rather the faqīr is whoever knows their Lord and is lost in

244 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 22.
aggrandizing Him.” These statements show how Ibn Nāṣir conceived Islamic spirituality as a combination of outward worship and inward purification. He defines valid worship as that which emanates from the servant’s inner state with God: “A worshipper (ʿābid) is not someone who worships out of fear of the fire. Rather, the worshipper is whoever worships out of fear of God. The one who fears God is noble, as God the Most High states: ‘Only those who have knowledge defer to Allah from among His slaves.’”

This last statement alludes to the role of authoritative religious knowledge within Nāṣirī discourse. In response to the perceived spread of innovative practices (bidʿa) and ignorance (jahil) during the Maraboutic Crisis, Ibn Nāṣir reasserted the centrality of transmission (riwāya) via authoritative chains of transmission (isnād) to defining Islamic spiritual practice. He concisely states the isnād’s essential nature in the conclusion of one of his legal opinions in the Ajwība:

My brother, please benefit from this response and do not be deceived by the free reign of ignorant people across the land, those who take knowledge from pages without a chain of transmission (riwāya), nor knowledge nor understanding. We seek refuge in God from ignorance and its causes.

Elsewhere, he illustrates how this epistemology’s influence on his spiritual path in a letter to prospective Nāṣirī adepts in Tlemcen:

Peace be upon you, along with God’s mercy and blessings. I praise God – there is no deity worthy of worship but He – to you. Moving on: I’ve considered your message and may God deliver you to what you seek. I advise you to have taqwā, to follow the sunna, to oppose your vain desires and to bear witness to God’s bounty. This is the way of our teachers. As for the matter of your provision, do not worry about it because God is the Provider who Has Power and is Firm (al-Mātīn). Rather, concern yourselves with that which will bring you closer to your

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246 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 204.
247 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 204, Qur’an translation by Fode Drame.
Lord. Again, I advise you to revere God and not to hope for or fear anything but God.

As for prayer beads, hospitality and wearing the woolen cloak, we have no chain of transmission (riwāyāt) for these practices. Rather, our path is the path of remembrance, which is along the lines of what al-Shaykh al-Sanūsī mentions at the end of his commentary on al-ʿAqīda al-Ṣughrā. If you seek to enter [our] lineage (silsila), then perfect your repentance according to its conditions. It is also incumbent for you to revere God and to put your trust in Him. Also, prepare yourselves for your resurrection and gather your provision and residence for the grave.

After morning prayer, once you’ve finished reading the transmitted litanies following the prayer, then you should say, “I seek God’s forgiveness” 100 times. Likewise, say, “O God! Send your prayers and peace upon our Master Muhammad, the motherly Prophet, and upon his family and companions,” also 100 times. Likewise say, “There is no God but Allāh”, 1000 times. This [is the litany] for literate men. As for women, it suffices them to say “There is no God but Allāh”, 100 times. And for someone who is [illiterate], they should read “There is no God but Allāh” 7000 times and add, upon completing every 100, “Muḥammad is God’s Messenger” – peace be upon him. This is the litany from morning until the next morning. If possible, do not let your tongue be idle from saying, “There is no God but Allāh”, at all times. This is perfection… The best times to do the litany are between the morning prayer and sunrise. If you complete it during this time, then that is sufficient until the following day, though it is best never to spend an hour without remembering God. If you are unable to do the litany at this time, then do it at a different time that is easier – from one morning to the next is a wide span of time.

Know that the path of our teachers is to make all litanies one, which is saying “There is no God but Allāh”. This is the most magnificent remembrance, [which we say] after preparing for it through seeking God’s forgiveness and sending prayers upon the Chosen Prophet, peace be upon him… Our teachers also let go of all other litanies, remembrances and supplications, except for praising the Prophet, peace be upon him, and reciting the Qur’ān, and did these in the manner descibed by al-Sanūsī. This is perfection.251

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249 This is a literal translation of the Arabic word al-diyāfa. It’s unclear what Ibn Nāṣir means by this statement because he and the Nāṣirīyya actively practiced hospitality through their zāwiya. See discussion in Ch. 2.

250 This is our translation of the Arabic word ʿāmī, as it is used in this context.

Here, Ibn Nāṣir justifies the authority of his Sufi practice by citing their authoritative transmission (*riwāya*). While his path was simpler than other prevalent traditions in his day, he argues that it was more faithful to Sufism’s roots in the Qur’an and *sunna*.

In addition to simplifying his follower’s practices, Ibn Nāṣir criticized prevalent Sufi customs that had no authentic basis. One of these was the *ḥadra*, or gathering for the group recitation of litanies. This practice spread widely in Morocco during the Sa`dī period and the Maraboutic Crisis. In the *Ajwiba*, he condemns the *ḥadra* as an innovation dating back to al-Sāmirī during the time of the Prophet Moses. He also argues that *ḥadra* is ultimately of no benefit and that it is better to make *dhikr* alone or recite Qur’ān. Ibn Nāṣir especially had no tolerance for the use of musical instruments, like drums, in Sufi gatherings. al-Ṣanhājī relates how Ibn Nāṣir once left his spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) to stop people making *ḥadra* with drums in the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s courtyard.

Ibn Nāṣir’s opposition to *ḥadra* also led him to condemn the followers of ʿAbd al-Salām al-Asmar (d. 981/1573) – a Zarrūqī contemporary of Ahmad b. Yūsuf al-Rāshidī – while in Libya during his first *ḥajj* in 1070/1660.

A concise statement of the relationship between knowledge, love and following (*ittibāʿ*) in the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood can be found in al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī’š letter to Nāṣirī adepts in Asafī. He opens his missive by stating, “Know that the servant is asked to worship God the Most High, which is a combination of knowledge and action.”

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252 In the *Ajwiba*, al-Ṣanhājī refers to *ḥadra* as the “custom” and “profession” of Sufis during his lifetime. See al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, *al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣirīyya*, 196.
255 See discussion in Ch. 4.
detailing the components of this knowledge, he warns his readers about following the example of other Sufi communities:

Be careful not to follow just anyone who calls you, for the ruptures in our religion have multiplied by virtue of the great number of pluralistic innovators (bi-kathrat al-muta’addidin al-mubtadi’īn). It is incumbent upon you to strive to do good deeds, both obligatory and voluntary, that will weigh down your scales on the Day of Judgment. Do not rely on idleness and deception, as many of the so-called fuqarā’ of our time have fallen into – we ask God to spare us and give us success. These people have heard about [the importance] of intention and love on the spiritual path, and they have sufficed themselves with both of these in name only, rather than striving (mujāhada), which is the [true] spiritual path. They do not know that the secret of one’s intention is their deeds. If there are no deeds, then there is no [true] intention. Additionally, love (al-mahabba) is only praiseworthy when it draws the lover to follow the beloved, and to emulate him and strive to follow (ittibā’) his path. If one’s love lacks these traits then it is deficient and of little benefit.257

The Nāṣirī expression of reverent, knowledgeable and loved-based obedience synthesizes its antecedents in Moroccan sulūk tradition. In addition to employing the concept of following (al-ittibā’) in Zarrūqian fashion, al-Yūsī’s emphasis on worshipping according to authoritative knowledge harkens back to al-Mabāḥīth al-Asliyya which affirms the Qur’ān and sunna as the foundations of Islamic spirituality. al-Yūsī also reprises al-Saraqusṭī’s emphasis on the character of the people of al-Suffā, or how they embodied their knowledge, by criticizing the tendency for contemporary Sufis to cultivate sincere intentions without worship. al-Yūsī uses the term mujāhada similarly to Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī’s notion of “striving to obey God” (al-jihād fī ṭā’at Allāh).

B. Ibn Nāṣir’s Construction of Religious Authority

A corresponding concern for Ibn Nāṣir was responding to the absence of qualified spiritual guides during the Maraboutic Crisis. In the *Ajwiba*, one petitioner asks Ibn Nāṣir whether a litany from a book can be used in the absence of a *shaykh*. He qualifies his inquiry, “due to the large number of corrupt and deceitful [guides] during our time, such that many ignorant people (*al-jahala*) claim to be Sufis.” Ibn Nāṣir alludes to the dangers of following an unqualified spiritual guide when describing the human being’s spiritual journey through remembrance (*dhikr*):

Remembrance (*dhikr*) requires the heart, and the heart requires remembrance. Neither can exist without the other. Once remembrance and the heart are joined, then wisdom (*ḥikma*) is attained. Remembrance cannot be pure unless the heart is pure, and the heart cannot be pure without [intimate knowledge of God] (*maʾrifah*). One’s knowledge of God (*maʾrifah*) is not perfected until one’s understanding of God’s oneness (*tawḥīd*) is pure, and this does not occur until one abandons *taqlīd*.* A knower of God (*ārif*) whose *tawḥīd* is incomplete cannot be followed according to our path. This is because he is [less stable] than a strand of hair, but [sharper] than a sword.

As Ibn Nāṣir suggests, the seeker can be led astray if he follows a guide whose knowledge and spirituality is incomplete. A few lines down, Ibn Nāṣir provides more details about a guide’s qualifications:

The connecting *shaykh* (*al-shaykh al-wāsil*) is God’s rope on Earth. Whoever connects with him will arrive [i.e. into God’s presence]. However, whoever connects with a *shaykh* who does not connect [to God], they will be cut off [i.e. from God’s presence]. [The connecting *shaykh*] is someone who takes knowledge from God [directly], without means, and how few are they.

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258 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, *al-Ajwiba*, 229
259 Here we see more of the influence of 8th/14th century Algerian Sufi and theologian Muhammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣanhājī on Ibn Nāṣir. al-Ṣanhājī criticized belief through *taqlīd* and encouraged every Muslim, educated or uneducated, to develop their own justified conviction in God. For a discussion of al-Ṣanhājī’s works and their influence, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Opening the Gate of Verification,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no. 38 (2006): 269-70.
Thus, Ibn Nāṣir bases a guide’s qualifications on their connection to God, which, if sufficiently strong, allows them unmediated access to Divine knowledge. With this knowledge, they can succeed in guiding others along the path into God’s presence. A guide who does not have a strong relationship with God is necessarily cut off from God’s knowledge and presence, so anyone following such a guide will likewise fail in their spiritual quest. Though Ibn Nāṣir is silent on his own qualifications as a guide, such a statement clearly positions himself as al-shaykh al-wāṣil.

What criteria display a guide’s knowledge and proximity to God? Ibn Nāṣir did not assign a great deal of authority to miracles and claims to esoteric knowledge or intimate discourses with God. Rather, he considered fidelity to the Qur’ān and sunna as the utmost expression of knowing, loving and fearing God. The Ajwiba records Ibn Nāṣir’s response when he was once asked to display a miracle:

Someone asked [Ibn Nāṣir] – may God be pleased with him – to show him the bounties that some of God’s allies have displayed to their students. He responded by saying: ‘As for what you mentioned about showing you such things, that is not in my hands, rather it is completely in God’s hands. I have not attained the same level as those awliyā’ so that I can show my companions what they show their companions by their hands. Rather, people have a good opinion of us and God works with them according to their intentions. So you should follow the Muḥammadan sunna and you will be shown things you can’t imagine.’

This statement displays many aspects of Ibn Nāṣir’s reverent love. Rather than criticizing practices that he did not approve, Ibn Nāṣir displayed considerable grace and humility while affirming the authority of his beliefs. Rather than admonishing his audience to revere God, he entices them to follow his example by emphasizing the spiritual benefits of following the sunna. Again, his audience asked him for a miracle. Though Ibn Nāṣir

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demurred, he indicated how fidelity to the sunna could lead them to their own miracles and much more.

Through his embrace of the spirituality of reverent love, Ibn Nāṣir succeed in serving as a unifying rather than divisive religious reformer in 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century Morocco. He enjoyed unanimous praise among his contemporaries and students for successfully synthesizing the sharīʿa and ḥaqīqa. In the Dāliyya, al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī writes that, while Ibn Nāṣir “clothed the ḥaqīqa with the sharīʿa”, he stood “at the meeting point of the two seas: the deep sea of ḥaqīqa / and the sea of sharīʿa filled with foam.”\textsuperscript{263} Ibn Nāṣir’s student Aḥmad al-Ḥasanī (d. 1127/1715) describes how Ibn Nāṣir’s reverent love helped heal Morocco after the trauma of the Maraboutic Crisis:

*Shaykh of the path and Imam of the inner reality (al-ḥaqīqa), reviver of the sunna and extinguisher of unlawful innovation, the one who feared God but not the reproach of others, who followed the Book and sunna for his entire life, the one by whom God revived our age and country, and by whom God rectified Creation and His servants […] He intensely followed the sunna…*

This view of Ibn Nāṣir was shared by the 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century Syrian chronicler Muḥammad al-Muhībī, who included an entry on Ibn Nāṣir in his biographical dictionary, *Khulāṣat al-Athar fi ‘A’yān al-Qarn al-Ḥādī ‘Ashar*:

Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī al-Maghribī: the grammarian, lexicopher and poet. The reviver (mujaddid) of the Shādhilī path, the guide to the scholars and jurists, the blessing of the West (barakat al-Maghrib). He possessed insights into the unseen (ṣāhib al-kushāfāt) and stood alone during his age. The people of the Maghrib all agreed upon his majesty and his magnificent worth. I do not think that anyone reached his level of fame among them. Indeed, often did I asked Moroccans about him and they immediately rushed to mention his virtues and his saintly station. I did not see them speak of anyone else like that.\textsuperscript{265}

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\textsuperscript{263} al-Ｙūsī, *Nayl al-Amānī*, 93-5.
\textsuperscript{264} Quoted in al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, *al-Durar*, v. 2, 549.
C. “The Boat of taqwā”: God-Reverence and Nāṣirī Politics

The Nāṣirī adoption of taqwā as a core religious value also influenced their relationship to Moroccan society. In addition to expressing reverence for God and the light of God’s magnificence, the Qur’an describes taqwā as a multifaceted ethical trait. This trait is comprised of a balance of justice (‘adl) and pardoning (ʿafw).266 Justice pushes the reverent servant to uphold God’s rights and responsibilities, and those of His creation, while pardoning instills restraint within their actions in order to prevent overstepping their bounds. The Qur’an describes transgressions (ʿudwān) as opposed to taqwā, and it is one of the traits that God despises in His servants.267 We can identify this balance of executing justice while displaying restraint within the Nāṣirīyya’s politics of taqwā.

The Nāṣirīyya’s scrupulous observation of God’s rights and boundaries led them to practice social and economic self-sustainability. This is clearly outlined in Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalifa’s discourse on the importance of good provision (al-qqūt al-ṭayyib). Ibn Nāṣir summarizes this principle as, “If the servant often eats, drinks and gets themselves involved in what the Book and sunna have forbidden, then Satan will come to him with tricks and deceptions, and thereby the servant will follow into disobedience and sin.”268 A long petition record in the Ajwiba discusses a longstanding custom in the Sūs of using rents gained through licensing water rights to support the needy and religious workers. The petitioner can only justify this practice by stating “this has been the custom

266 Qur’ān 5:8 states, “act justly, that is nearer to Allah’s reverence,” and 2:237 states, “that you forego is closer to Allah’s reverence.” See also, Drame, “Kitāb Fāḍāʿil al-Akhlaq.”
267 See Qur’ān, 5:2 and elsewhere.
of our area of the Sūs for centuries leading up to now.” Ibn Nāṣir responds that these practices are likely illicit and, if members of the petitioner’s community pray behind an imam who is paid from such funds, their prayers are invalid and should be remade. Later, Ibn Nāṣir clarifies his rationale for this decision. Responding to a question about the proper way to gather a salary for a local Qur’an teacher, he states:

[The teacher’s salary] should be divided among those who employ him in whatever manner they all agree to. As for the revenues that pastoral and rural communities (ahl al-bādiya wa ahl al-qurā) derive from water rights, this is not permissible unless the community consents to their use in this way without being deceived or ignorant of such. This is because custom must be weighed against the sunna. If [a custom] agrees with the sunna, then it can continue, but if not, then [it must be abandoned].

Ibn Nāṣir displays this approach again in a subsequent response. Here, his petitioner expresses concern about the effects of Ibn Nāṣir’s reforms on the rural communities’ religious infrastructure:

Should the ancestors’ custom of funding mosques with revenues from water rights and other sources be abandoned because the shariʿa forbids it? Even in the case where this may lead to mosques being abandoned because of the unlikelihood of finding lawful sources of revenue to support them? This is because most people today only observe the customs of their ancestors and do not care about the reward of constructing mosques, nor do they observe the bounds of religious permissibility and impermissibility (wa lā al-ḥalāl wa lā al-ḥarrām) due to the depths of their ignorance and transgression. Or should we leave [the shariʿa] due to necessity? If someone is driven to fund a mosque in such [an impermissible way] out of necessity, is he given license to do so or not?

In response, Ibn Nāṣir places religious principle before his petitioner’s concerns:

[Ibn Nāṣir] said [in response]: It is obligatory for everyone to purify their sources of income. Whoever reveres God, He will make a way for them out [of hardship]. God’s Earth is wide.

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We find another example in one of al-Khalifā’s public sermons that opens with a discussion of the important of licit (halal) consumption. He states:

Know, may God give us and you success, that the root of all good things is not to transgress God’s boundaries and to hurry [to respond] to His commandment. Truly goodness’ key, its foundation and its reins is a mouthful of ḥalāl [provision]. This is what reinforces your affairs. Know as well that most of this path – the path of the righteous – is consuming ḥalāl [provision]…  

al-Khalifā proceeds with identifying and criticizing common, yet illegitimate economic practices. He warns his audience not to take money from soldiers:

Beware, then beware, then beware of taking money from wrongdoing soldiers and others, and abandon all means of growing close to them.  

Later he warns them of the spiritual harm caused by mixing too closely with Morocco’s Sultanic government (al-makhzan):

I’ve witnessed a group of contemporary Sufis whose spiritual insight (fīrāsa) and accepted prayers I’ve experience firsthand, be cut off from [these spiritual powers] and lose the acceptance of their prayers due to their close ties with members of the makhzan and other impious, wrongdoing leaders whose money they also took…

In response to these challenges, he presents an image of an ideal community: the boat of taqwa. Grounded in reverence, this community is protected from destruction by God’s grace and mercy:

People today, in our time, are beset by a flood of tribulations caused by wrongdoers and the impious. Their faith has been corrupted by their misdeeds and their money stolen by oppressive rulers. Yet, whoever rides through this flood on taqwā’s boat (safīnat al-taqwā) they will be saved by the bounty and mercy of God the Most High: “whosoever reveres Allah, He will make a way for him
out.”

The “boat of taqwā” aptly describes the Nāṣirīyya’s relationship to the turmoil of Morocco’s Maraboutic Crisis and the subsequent rise of the ḌAlawite dynasty. In the midst of this instability, Ibn Nāṣir strove to occupy a neutral position with regard to Morocco’s political situation. At the same time, he strove to fulfill his responsibilities as leader of the Nāṣirī community and protect its best interests. Maintaining such an ambivalent position proved difficult, and the Nāṣirīyya were not spared the ḌAlawī Sultans’ ire. However, they succeeded in being the only major Sufi community in Morocco to maintain its independence during the transition from the Maraboutic Crisis into the ḌAlawī era.

The key element of Ibn Nāṣir’s political success was his restraint. Unlike other ḡāwil leadership during his time, he did not seek to militarize his community or ally with tribal groups. While he did exercise power as a religious leader and social critic, his attempts to influence Wādī Dar’a’s politics were bound by his commitment to taqwā and the classical Shadhili principle of isqāt al-tadbīr. Isqāt al-tadbīr literally means the abandonment of one’s self-dispensation of their affairs. Practically speaking, Ibn Nāṣir did not hesitate to command to right and forbid wrong, even in the political arena, but he did not seek to affect change through political action. He famously opposed jihād, stating during the Maraboutic Crisis that, “There is no jihād without the permission of the

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275 Qur’ān, 65:2.
Sultan.”278 He also cooperated with political leaders while he remained aloof and independent of their influence. He was not shy to condemn their actions, including those of the ‘Alawī Sultan. Yet when threatened – rhetorically or with force – he turned to God for relief rather than taking matters into his own hands. This principled and neutral political approach allowed Ibn Nāṣir to preserve the integrity of his community during the Maraboutic Crisis and the transition to ‘Alawī rule. At times, however, the ‘Alawī Sultans perceived his fierce, pious independence as a threat to their rule.

During the Maraboutic Crisis, Ibn Nāṣir maintained a neutral position towards Dar‘a’s rulers. Prior to embarking on his spiritual path, he played an important role as a mediator between Abū al-Hassūn al-Samlālī’s governor in Dar‘a and the local population in Aghlān. This relationship remained productive until the beginning of the ‘Alawite movement in the 1050s/1640s that divided Dar‘a’s society with the tribal leaders of the quṣūr supporting al-Samlālī and several prominent Sufi leaders supporting the ‘Alawīs. Ibn Nāṣir became caught in this conflict when al-Samlālī’s forces imprisoned him in the midst of fighting against Mawlay Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf.279 Similarly, it seems likely that Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī’s death came as a result of his real or suspected support of the ‘Alawī movement.

Ibn Nāṣir became the leader of the Tamgrūt zāwiya after Mawlay Muḥammad’s defeat of al-Samlālī. As had been the case with al-Samlālī, Ibn Nāṣir cooperated with Mawlay Muḥammad to fulfill the needs of his community. Correspondence between the two men documents Ibn Nāṣir’s influence with the ‘Alawī leader. For example, he

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278 al-Dar‘ī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣiriyya, 120.
succeeded in persuading Mawlay Muḥammad to appoint Nāṣirī scholars as judges and jurisconsults in Dar’a and Sijilmāsā. Likewise, Ibn Nāṣir developed a consultative relationship with al-Qā’id al-Zaynabī, the ‘Alawī governor in Dar’a. It also became commonplace for Nāṣirī adepts to carry written attestations from Ibn Nāṣir that secured them favorable treatment from ‘Alawī officials. However, Ibn Nāṣir’s cooperation with the ‘Alawī administration did not signal his cooptation into their political project. Ibn Nāṣir refused to pray for the ‘Alawī Sultan by name after his Friday sermons because he considered the practice to be a bid’a. Many in the ‘Alawī administration viewed this as treasonous behavior. While Mawlay Muḥammad tolerated Ibn Nāṣir’s position, it caused a serious conflict between the Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh and Mawlay Muḥammad’s successor, Mawlay al-Rashīd al-‘Alawī.

Mawlay al-Rashīd’s betrayal and killing of his brother, Mawlay Muḥammad, in 1665/1075 appears to have spoiled relations between al-Rashīd and Ibn Nāṣir. When Mawlay al-Rashīd was sworn in as Morocco’s Sultan, Ibn Nāṣir did not attend the festivities. Nor did he formally offer the Sultan his pledge of allegiance (bay’a). Ibn Nāṣir’s reticence did not go unnoticed by Mawlay al-Rashīd, who occupied himself during the early years of his rule with destroying Morocco’s leading Sufi lodges. al-Rashīd destroyed the Dilā’iyya zāwiya, confiscated its library and exiled its residents to Fez after defeating Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilā’ī in battle in 1668/1079. In 1071/1081,

\[\text{References:}\]

280 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 444.
283 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 452.
284 This is considering Ibn Nāṣir’s close relationship with Mawlay Muḥammad.
he conquered the Sūs and destroyed the zāwiya of Ilīgh, the seat of Abū al-Hassūn al-Samlālī’s Tazerwalt Emirate. The following year, he captured the zāwiya of Aıt ‘Ayyāsh in the Atlas Mountains outside of Sijilmāsa, and exiled its residents to Fez. He then proceeded to capture the zāwiya of ’Alī b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Darʿī in the Middle Atlas Mountains and imprison its leader. Then he set his sights on Ibn Nāṣir’s zāwiya in Tamgrūt.

ʿAmālik writes that, once Mawlay al-Rashīd learned of Ibn Nāṣir’s refusal to pray for him after his Friday sermon, he sent a letter to the shaykh warning him that if he did not change his ways that he would attack his zāwiya and remove him from his position. Ibn Nāṣir responded politely, reassuring the Sultan of his acceptance of him and welcoming him to visit the zāwiya. Yet he did not change his position on praying for the Sultan. Mawlay al-Rashīd responded by ordering his governor, the same al-Qāʿid al-Zaynabī, to pressure Ibn Nāṣir to change his ways. When Ibn Nāṣir learned that al-Zaynabī had started to harass members of the Nāṣiriyya, the shaykh came swiftly to their defense. He wrote to al-Zaynabī:

Revere God! And do not violate our zāwiya’s sanctity. Be careful, for God may save those Muslims [whom you are harming] and put you through a trial. Then, you will find no sanctuary to shelter you, nor any refuge to protect you. Indeed, I am a sincere counselor to you, a sincere counselor to you, indeed.

Ibn Nāṣir’s exhortations persuaded al-Zaynabī to hesitate in fulfilling Mawlay al-Rashīd’s orders to destroy the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya and replace its shaykh. At this point,

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287 al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqsā’, v. 7, 40.
Mawlay al-Rashīd sent a new letter to threaten Ibn Nāsir. This earned the shaykh’s harsh rebuke. Ibn Nāsir concluded his rebuttal by quoting the words of Pharaoh’s magicians, who were threatened with torture and death: “Therefore, decree that which you are going to decree. You can only decree in regards to the life of this world.”293 In response, Mawlay al-Rashīd decided to lead a military detachment from Marrakech to attack the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt. However, Mawlay al-Rashīd suddenly died before this expedition could fulfill its mission.

While historians have offered varied analyses of this conflict,294 perhaps the most accurate and concise assessment of these events is found in Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī’s Kitāb al-Istiqāṣā’:

[At this time], a series of threatening letters were exchanged between al-Mawlay al-Rashīd – May God have Mercy on Him – and the shaykh of his age, the Imam Abū Abd Allāh Maḥammad b. Nāsir al-Darī – may God be please with him – then [Mawlay al-Rashīd] died afterwards and the shaykh’s matter was taken care of.295

Throughout this conflict, Ibn Nāsir did not hesitate to defend his and his follower’s rights before the ‘Alawite administration and Mawlay al-Rashīd himself. However, he did not seek to bolster his strength through militarization. Rather, he resorted to patience, prayer and reliance on God. This spiritual activism allowed Ibn Nāsir to defend his interests without showing himself to be a worldly threat to ‘Alawī governance. Had he chosen the latter, it seems likely that he would not have escaped Mawlay al-Rashīd’s or Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s retribution.

293 Qur’an, 20:72.
294 Āmālik discusses the range of interpretations behind this event in detail. See Jawānib, v. 3, 459-60.
Ibn Nāṣir exemplifies a balanced, spiritual approach in a letter written to a group of his tribal followers who were considering abandoning their homes after hearing of Mawlay al-Rashīd’s impending invasion of Darʿa:

Never tire of turning to us in times of need… Avoid getting involved in things that do not concern you and preserve the foundations [of your religious practice], and you will be accepted [by God]. I implore you to practice the utmost scrupulousness concerning what enters your belly and the clothes that you wear. Doing so is the foundation of uprightness, and truly God is whom we rely upon.

With regard to the hardships that have befallen the Muslims, do not be concerned with that. Bear them with a beautiful patience. God will compensate for all of that. If your religious practice remains sound, then everything else is easy. Never fear poverty for you or your children. Rather, trust in God’s storehouses. Anytime you give something [in charity], do not doubt that God will compensate you and give you your reward in full on the Day of Judgment, for, God willing, your charity will be accepted…

As for the idea of fleeing, which your tribe is considering, do not agree to go along with it, and do not leave your home. Be patient, for there is no escape but to escape to God with your heart. God will make ease for you after hardship, and it may that [ease will come] soon.296

Ibn Nāṣir strikes a very similar turn in the following letter to one of his followers who beseeched the Nāṣirī shaykh to seek al-Qāʿid al-Zaynābī’s intercession with the ‘Alawī Sultan:

Peace and God’s mercy be upon you. As for your matter, our matter and the matter of all Muslims, we have raised them to God. As for al-[Zaynābī], we have no need of him. We have been forbidden to write to oppressors. More so, I have seen no ploy but for the hearts to flee to the Knower of the Unseen. Indeed, God’s gentleness is closer than all of that… [As for] your crops, we deposit them with God, so do not move them. Whatever is yours, no one will take them… If the Sultan gets near to you, then go out and explain yourself to him and [tell him] that you are obedient to him. Truly, God is whom we rely upon.

As for our matter with the makhzan, do not be concerned with that. Our zāwiya has a protector, who is God the Blessed and Most High, because it is His house.297

296 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 273-4
297 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 273
Conclusion

The division and anarchy sewn by the Maraboutic Crisis threatened the integrity of Moroccan society in the 11th/17th century. The Sa’dī dynasty’s once effective administration crumbled as Ahmad al-Manṣūr’s sons turned against one another in pursuit of their father’s throne, sacrificing their family’s reputation as noble shura’ī leaders in the process. The Jazāliyya brotherhood was unable to successfully respond to this crisis. The brotherhood’s support of jihād only exacerbated the conflict between al-Manṣūr’s successors. Jazālī figures like al-Mujāhid al-ʿAyyāshī, Muḥammad al-Ḥājj al-Dilāʾī and Yaḥyā al-Ḥāhī all joined the conflict at different stages. Pro-jihād discourse may have also encouraged figures like Ibn Abī Maḥallī, whose campaign for religious reform in the Tāfīlālt served as a platform for his own assault on Sultan Zaydān al-Sa’dī.

On a deeper level, these actions illustrate how the Jazāliyya’s vertically orientated spirituality was poorly suited to support reconciliation among Morocco’s warring factions. The light of God’s supremacy (al-kibriyāʾ) is a segregating light, dividing between Truth (al-ḥaqq) and Falsehood (al-bāṭil). As contemporary observers, like al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī and others, noted, the individuals who stepped up to right wrongs during the Maraboutic Crisis only served to spread corruption through the divisiveness of their movements.

When Ibn Nāṣir became the leader of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya in 1054/1644, he sought to address the root causes of the Maraboutic Crisis by amplifying the light of God’s magnificence (al-ʿazama). In contrast to the light of supremacy, the light of God’s magnificence has an aggregating effect. In this way, Ibn Nāṣir’s call to reverent love
sought to reunify the disparate elements of Morocco’s sociopolitical and religious fields. Reverent love affirmed the primacy of the *sunna* and the *sharīʿa* over local customs and the inspired knowledge of individual mystics and religious figures. This served to refocus the sources of religious authority in Morocco within Islam’s universal discursive tradition, lessening the power of more local and particular elements. Additionally, the Nāṣirīyya’s politics of *taqwā* demonstrated how reverent love could be implemented on an individual and communal scale. Not only did Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣirīyya work to restore property rights and economic equity, but they also established a new regime of authority within their community based on the love for and scrupulous observance of God’s word. Ibn Nāṣir demonstrated his commitment to these ideals through his own piety and religious practice, as well as his political neutrality. While many of his peers became entangled in the restoration of Sultanic power during the Maraboutic Crisis, Ibn Nāṣir remained aloof. With the rise of the ʿAlawī Dynasty, this position exposed the Nāṣirīyya to threats of violence and destruction. However, Ibn Nāṣir resolve did not waver. His nonviolent resistance to ʿAlawī pressure not only succeeded in preserving the Nāṣirīyya’s independence, but also demonstrated the power of his spiritual tradition. When Ahmad al-Khalīfa described the Nāsirī community as “the boat of *taqwā*”, he did so knowing that his father had weathered many storms by cleaving to the principles of reverent love. Many Moroccans saw this as well, and they flocked to Ibn Nāṣir and al-Khalīfa during the remainder of the 11th/17th century. In this way, the Nāṣirīyya’s emergence signaled a sea change in the history of Moroccan Sufism.

The studies carried out in next two chapters explore the depth and breadth of the Nāṣirīyya’s impact on religious life in Morocco during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th
centuries. Chapter 2 studies the structure of the Nāṣirī community as an expression their discourse of reverent love. First known as the “community of love” (ahl al-mahābbah), the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood spread throughout Morocco primarily through the practice of seeking knowledge (ṭalab al-ʿilm). As Ibn Nāṣīr’s reputation as a religious scholar and spiritual master had spread widely by the mid-11th/17th century, more and more students came to Tamgrūt to study with him. Upon completion of their studies, many of these students brought the Nāṣirīyya’s teachings back to their home communities. Others were sent to new areas to found local Nāṣirī branches. A key feature of the Nāṣirīyya’s expansion during this was the establishment of Sufi lodges (sing. zāwiya) across Morocco. Modeled after the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt, these institutions served as spaces for the application and articulation of reverent love. Chapter 3 analyzes Ibn Nāṣīr’s and the Nāṣirīyya’s scholarly tradition. Ibn Nāṣīr’s commitment to Islam’s transmitted sciences, and particular the science of ḥadīth, was a direct result of his embrace of reverent love. This chapter illustrates how the scholarly institutions established by Ibn Nāṣīr served to cultivate Islam’s scriptural tradition. In turn, it shows how the Nāṣirīyya succeeded in restoring the study and elaboration of Islamic law and its attendant religious sciences after their decline during the Maraboutic Crisis.
Chapter 2

The Ahl al-Maḥabba: An outline of the Early Nāṣirī Community

The believers are but brothers so reconcile between your two brothers and revere Allah so
that perhaps you may receive mercy.
- Qur’an, 49:10

Introduction

This chapter explores the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood’s growth and expansion during
the lifetimes of its first two leaders, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Darʿī and his son Aḥmad al-
Khalīfa. The early Nāṣirī community took shape around its leaders’ discourse of reverent
love. In their correspondence with adepts, Ibn Nāṣir and al-Khalīfa constantly refer to
their audience as the ahl al-maḥabba, or “the community of love.” This community was
defined by mutual bonds of obedience (jā’a), reverence (taqwā) and love (maḥabba).
This chapter analyzes how the discourse of reverent love drove Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad
al-Khalīfa’s policies as zāwiya leaders. Both men’s commitment to social justice and the
restoration of social stability addressed the needs of Wādī Darʿa society in the midst of
the Maraboutic Crisis. Over the second half of the 11th/17th century, the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya
grew into a prosperous religious center that served as a site for the mediation of social
conflict and a refuge for displaced peoples, travelers, merchants and, most importantly,
students. As a regional scholarly center, the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya attracted students from
across Morocco and the Northwest Sahara. After completing these studies, many of these
students returned to their home communities. This movement of peoples drove the 
Nāṣirīyya’s translocal expansion during this period.

This chapter proceeds to analyze the composition and organization of Nāṣirī affiliated communities in 11th/17th century Morocco’s cities and countryside. The Nāṣirīyya took root in urban centers, such as Marrakech, Rabat and Fez, as well as sedentary and tribal communities in rural areas, like the Southern Sūs region. Likewise, the brotherhood attracted members from every level of Moroccan society. However, the Nāṣirīyya was especially successful in recruiting adepts from the literate and scholarly classes. This comes from analyzing Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s correspondence with their students outside of Tamgrūt. These documents reveal how Nāṣirī affiliated communities were organized and contain information on their social composition. Particular attention is paid to describing women’s significant involvement in the Nāṣirī movement from its inception.

The Early Nāṣirī Community: A Social Expression of Reverent Love

As we saw in the previous chapter, the defining feature of the Zarrūqī and Nāṣirī articulation of reverent love was its emphasis on voluntary, faithful obedience to God and the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s writings demonstrate they viewed obedience (ṭāʿa) as the key organizational principle of their community. Within this system, the Nāṣirī shaykh served as God’s representative on earth (khalīfa) and was answerable to Him. Local delegates (sing. muqaddam) were leaders of local Nāṣirī branch communities. They were responsible for obeying the shaykh’s instructions and were granted substantial latitude in conducting their affairs. Local delegates were often
assisted by religious scholars (mutafaqqihūn or ‘ulamā’) who taught and guided Nāṣirī students (talaba), adepts (fuqarā’) and members of the general community. Each Nāṣirī branch community was expected to obey its muqaddam. Students were to obey their teachers. Wives were to obey their husbands and children were to obey their parents. The Nāṣiriyya believed that loving obedience in interpersonal relationships reflected and helped one to perfect loving obedience to their Lord. One’s fulfillment of their role within this system led to worldly and spiritual felicity. Ibn Nāsir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s ultimate goal was to guide their community towards living in harmony with God’s will which required perfectly obeying and responding to Divine commandment.

Love was essential to maintain this hierarchy of obedience. Love features prominently in al-Tarakuntī’s poem *Masarrat al-Ikhwān*, which, inter alia, describes Ibn Nāṣir’s teachings and leadership. He describes how the Nāṣirī concept of love inculcated an environment of tolerance and mercy among the brotherhood’s members. He writes that Ibn Nāṣir taught his adepts that it was incumbent (wājib) upon them to “love” (tawaddud) and “be kind” (iḥsān) to one another.1 Ibn Nāṣir also taught his students to prioritize fulfilling the rights of their Nāṣirī brothers ahead of those of their blood relations.2 al-Tarakuntī goes on to describe the importance of sincere love to Nāṣirī spiritual practice:3

[Ibn Nāṣir] used to say, ‘Everything you’ve sought / From the God of the Throne is for you

Based on the sincerity and pure love / [You display] among your brethren, followed by good intentions

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Anyone devoid of love /  
Will not attain an atom’s worth of good

[Love] is the proof of sincerity and certainty /  
Its people are the best in the religion’

Ibn Nāṣir’s concept of love was intertwined with notions of sincerity, fidelity and trust. Yet, this reverent love also had boundaries. al-Tarakuntī writes that Ibn Nāṣir excommunicated members of the order who were convicted of wrongfully attacking their brethren or committing brigandry.⁴

An undated letter from Maḥammad b. Nāṣir to his adepts in Chefchaouen demonstrates the importance of fidelity and trust to the expression of reverent love in the Nāṣirī community.⁵ Upon learning his adepts had fallen astray by following a Nāṣirī impostor, Ibn Nāṣir sternly admonishes them. He warns them of the punishment for adepts who violate their covenant with their spiritual guide:

In my view, all of you have failed, disputed with one another about your affair (tanāza 'tum fi al-amr), and have inclined towards this world and following vain desire. You’ve exchanged patience for anguish and contentment for ambition. Wake up from your confusion and rouse yourselves from your slumber! Be fearful for the length of your wandering, for this is a serious matter not to be taken lightly. The punishment for an adept (faqīr) who breaches their contract [with their shaykh] is severe. Whoever does not strive to free themselves of this will fall in to a bottomless pit of perdition.⁶

Ibn Nāṣir then advises his adepts to return to the principles of reverent love they had abandoned:

So love one another, feed each other, visit each other, be patient with one another and consult one another… Do not cut your bonds and do not turn away from one another. Command each other to what is right and forbid one another from evil with kindness and not violence. Place death at the forefront of your vision, for

none of you know when its time will come. We rely upon and trust God, from whom emanates our and your success and guidance to the straight path.\(^7\)

At the end of his letter, Ibn Nāṣir warns his adepts against following anyone who comes to them claiming to be a Nāṣirī while seeking worldly gain: “Do not trust anyone who comes to you claiming to be related to us while seeking worldly ambition. Indeed, the foundation of our path is eliminating one’s ambition.”\(^8\)

A. The Nāṣiryya zāwīya as a space of God-Reverence (taqwā)

As a zāwīya leader, Ibn Nāṣir played an important role within Wādī Darʾa’s society. The Maraboutic Crisis created an acute need for social services, education and conflict mediation, all of which Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣiryya sought to provide.\(^9\) Early Nāṣirī texts demonstrate how the Qur’ānic ethics of reverence (taqwā) guided Ibn Nāṣir’s response to the needs of his surrounding community. The first step in Ibn Nāṣir’s revival of taqwā was to transform the Tamgrūt zāwīya into a regional learning center.\(^10\) As a trained jurist, Ibn Nāṣir associated the return of justice within Moroccan society with the revival of the sharīʿa and the Prophetic sunna as the preeminent sources of social and religious norms. The practice of seeking knowledge (ṭalab al-ʿilm) was a key factor in the Nāṣiryya’s growth during Ibn Nāṣir’s lifetime. As one of the few active scholarly centers

\(^7\) al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣiryya, 271.
\(^8\) al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣiryya, 271.
\(^10\) Qurʾān, 2:282, associates having taqwā with receiving knowledge from God.
in Morocco during the Maraboutic Crisis, the Nāṣiriyya ẓāwiya attracted students and scholars from across the country. Many of these students received Ibn Nāṣir’s permission to transmit the Nāṣiriyya’s litanies and induct new members into the order. As Ibn Nāṣir’s students completed their studies and returned to their homes, or embarked on further journeys, they spread his teachings and the Nāṣiriyya’s spiritual path with them. Ibn Nāṣir’s establishment of a regular hajj caravan from Tamgrūt also contributed to the Nāṣiriyya’s expansion on a transregional scale. During his two pilgrimages in 1659-60 and 1666-7, Ibn Nāṣir transmitted the Nāṣiriyya order in communities across the North African pilgrimage route and established connections with scholars in Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula.\(^\text{11}\)

In addition to his educational mission, Ibn Nāṣir sought to develop the Nāṣiriyya ẓāwiya as a welcoming space for visitors, residents and the outside community. This was accomplished through an emphasis on traditional Islamic values of hospitality along with the progressive expansion of the ẓāwiya’s resources and facilities. Like mosques and madrasas, Sufi lodges were established through pious endowments (awqāf or aḥbās). In 11\(^{th}/17^{th}\) century Morocco, Sufi lodges were considered to be public spaces whose resources were intended for general benefit. Though a shaykh had authority over the use of his lodge’s resources, religious ethics dictated that these institutions actively engage in charity and hospitality. In order to ensure that his ẓāwiya would be able to fulfill its charitable role, Ibn Nāṣir sought to develop its material and social resources. When he became shaykh of the Tamgrūt ẓāwiya, he married Ḥafṣa al-Anṣāriyya, Aḥmad b.

\(^{11}\) These achievements will be addressed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.
Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī’s widow, which gave him access to endowments al-Anṣārī had used to support the zāwiya. Though these resources gave the new shaykh a foundation on which to base his education and social activities, reports from this period show this was a time of privation. However, as stability in Morocco increased with the success of Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī’s campaign for the throne in 1078/1668, this wealth began to increase as Ibn Nāṣir’s prominence in Darʿa society grew.

Ibn Nāṣir’s authority grew as he established himself as a successful social mediator in the Wādi Darʿa. In a letter Ibn Nāṣir wrote during his first ḥajj in 1660/1070, and addressed to students he appointed to oversee the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s affairs in his absence, he exhorts them to “maintain good relations in the community (iṣlāḥ dhāt al-bayn), focus on the general public’s well-being, hold back those doing wrong and aid those who are oppressed.” These counsels show the link between the ethics of taqwā and social mediation. In a letter cited by Aḥmad ʿAmālik, Ibn Nāṣir describes the goals of social mediation as the alleviation of fear and restoration of security so that the general populace feels safe and free to interact with one another. Another of Ibn Nāṣir’s letters records the terms of a peace agreement struck between two warring tribes. The document records a four-month truce between the two groups on the basis of reverence for God (taqwā) whom Ibn Nāṣir identifies as the pact’s “guarantor, and avenger of whoever contravenes it.” ʿAmālik writes that short-term truces were common, especially during

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14 The Qurʾān explicitly links the maintenance of social bonds (iṣlāḥ dhāt al-bayn) to reverence. See Qurʾān, 49:9-10.
times of planting and harvest, to prevent major disruptions to Darʿa’s socioeconomic fabric. Ibn Nāṣir’s successful social mediation fostered a return of public safety and economic prosperity. Local trade and agricultural production revived as did the transregional caravan trade which served to reestablish Darʿa’s important position at the intersection of the Northwest Sahara’s main trading routes.

Much of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s wealth came through gifts received in response to Ibn Nāṣir’s service as a mediator for individuals and the wider community. Within pre-modern Muslim societies, gift giving was considered an appropriate sign of gratitude for someone’s favor, especially if such favor came from an authority. The Nāṣirīyya encouraged charity as a pious act and its leaders received gifts and charity from their adepts. However, they opposed the common practice among Moroccan Sufis of compelling adepts to financially support their teachers and lodges. Nonetheless, gifts and donations were a key means by which the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s wealth increased during the 11th/17th century. Ibn Nāṣir’s biographers record many instances of gift giving as responses to his miracles (karāmāt). In one such story, Ibn Nāṣir received half of a large palm grove out of gratitude for his role in reviving its water supply.

During Ibn Nāṣir’s tenure, the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s wealth comprised property, livestock, water rights, currency and slaves acquired through donations and purchases. In addition to agricultural land, the zāwiya also acquired large tracts of pasture for its sheep,

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17 Ṭāhā, Jawānīb, v. 2, 409.
18 Roy Mottahedeh discusses the concept of shukr al-ni’ma, or showing gratitude for a favor, as one of the means of creating bonds of loyalty in traditional Muslim societies. See Roy P. Mottahedeh, Loyalty and Leadership in an Early Islamic Society, Rev. ed (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2001), Ch. 2.
horses, donkeys and other livestock. Similarly, Ibn Nāṣir acquired a large portion of the water rights around Tamgrūt and the wider Dar’a Valley due to his just management of the traditional water management system. Though properties like these were considered part of the zāwiya’s endowments, their exploitation by merchants or the zāwiya’s residents for commerce was not prohibited. As long as they were carried out within the bounds of Islamic law, commercial activities were considered permissible and pious acts. Outside merchants approached the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya to rent agricultural land or water rights. Water usage was often negotiated using in-kind payments of parcels of land which further increased the zāwiya’s landholdings. As shaykh, Ibn Nāṣir directed his students and lay affiliates toward cultivating his lodge’s arable lands, thereby increasing the Dar’a valley’s overall economic productivity. Sharecropping and slave labor were also features of this economy. Sharecropping operated according to the khammās system by which tenant farmers were given access to a parcel of land and entitled to keep a fifth of its produce, turning the remainder over to the zāwiya. Slaves, mostly of West African origin, were gifted to the zāwiya as endowments (ahlās). They worked as field hands, laborers or servants. Others served as craftsmen, providing skilled labor or in administrative capacities. The Nāṣirīyya were active in the slave trade and other transregional commercial activities throughout Southern Morocco and the Northwest Sahara.

\[21\] Amālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 368. The zāwiya’s pastures were location in the southern Laktāwa oasis, which was known for its lush pasture lands.
\[22\] Amālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 366, includes a detailed discussion of this system.
\[23\] Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 100.
\[24\] Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 102.
\[25\] Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 103.
\[26\] Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 104.
Under Ibn Nāṣir’s leadership, the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya also established itself as a hub for transregional caravan traffic. The lodge’s commitment to hospitality and its leader’s authority as a social and commercial arbitrator made it an ideal stopping point for merchants. The zāwiya served as a depot for caravans traveling along the latitudinal trading routes that linked the Atlantic port of Agadir to the Saharan oasis of Tuwāt in modern-day Algeria. The Nāṣiriyya zāwiya served a similar role for Trans-Saharan traders traveling along the ṭarāq ṭaṁtūnī between the Niger River bend and Sijilmāsa as well as along more Westerly routes linking markets in the Sūs and the Northwest Sahara.27 ʿAmālik notes that caravan activity in Tamgrūt was especially heavy in weeks prior to the hajj when Nāṣirī followers from across the region gathered before departing on their pilgrimage to Mecca.28

Nāṣirī sources describe Ibn Nāṣir’s commitment to maintaining the ethics of taqwā while administering his zāwiya’s resources. In his Muḥḍarāt, Ibn Nāṣir’s student al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (d. 1102/1691) writes that, in Morocco, Sufi lodges were closely associated with the practice of distributing food (iṭʿām al-ṭaʿām) as hospitality to visitors and as assistance to residents and the outside community. He explains how this practice led many common people to consider iṭʿām al-ṭaʿām as one of a zāwiya’s required duties. He explains the origins of these practices as follows:

The zāwiya, as it is known today among the Sufis (ahl al-ṭarīq), is famous for constantly providing food (iṭʿām al-ṭaʿām) for visitors and residents. [As such], commoners view [the provision of food] as one of a [zāwiya’s] required duties, or a condition of its existence, though there is not explicit basis for this specification, nor is there a mention of such in the Book or sunna. Nonetheless, this practice stems from generosity (al-qirā) and being hospitable to guests (ikrām al-ḍayf), and there is no doubt that such deeds are demanded [of us]. Thus, we find the

27 These activities are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
28 See discussion in Chapter 4.
hadīth, “Whoever believes in God and the Last Day should host their guest [generously]”. However, this commandment is shared among all Muslims and not specifically for the Sufi or the qudwa.²⁹

He proceeds to explain how a shaykh’s social stature depends on their generosity:

Today, it is common for Sufis to establish lodges (zawāyā) to distribute food, especially in our homeland of Morocco, and most particularly in rural areas. [Thus], the shaykh redistributes whatever resources he obtains [through gifts or charity] to his neighbors and visitors. This is an old practice. […] [The provision of food] has become so widespread today, that common people in the countryside view this as a condition for visiting a saint or for any individual who claims to be a shaykh. Furthermore, they view the vigor and ease with which [one distributes food] as a saintly miracle, and they do not pay attention to someone from whom they fail see these qualities. This has caused both great benefit and tremendous harm.³⁰

Ibn Nāṣir’s biographers emphasize his generosity. His student Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Wallālī (d. 1128/1717) writes that Ibn Nāṣir incorporated any money he earned or was given into his zāwiya’s endowments so that it could be used for public benefit.³¹ This included providing food to the zāwiya’s residents, guests and surrounding community.

In a letter to an anonymous petitioner, Ibn Nāṣir illustrates how this generosity relates to his piety and scrupulousness. In the note, he encourages the recipient to travel to the zāwiya and not to worry about arriving with a large group of companions:

It has reached us that you intend to travel to us. This makes us very happy and we are [now] pleasantly occupied with preparing to see your joyous visage. As you travel, do not be distressed by the number of those who [desire to accompany you] out of concern over the size of the crowd and our ability to accommodate them. Verily, this is God’s house, then your home and a home to all Muslims. God, the Most High and Exalted, established it for this reason, and by God’s bounty, it is not disturbed by large numbers of guests, even if they come by the thousands and stay for extended periods. Rather, [our house] is honored to [host

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visitors], and doing so does not decrease the bounty God has bestowed [on us] in the slightest.\textsuperscript{32}

In this passage, Ibn Nāṣir associates the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s role in hosting visitors with his role as a Saint to uphold righteousness in the world. He absolves himself of the authority to even attempt to regulate his lodge’s visitors, stating clearly that, as a sacred space, the zāwiya belongs to God who provides for its residents and guests. With the combination of these means, and its leader’s reputation as a scholarly and spiritual guide, the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya succeeded in reinvigorating patterns of scholarly travel that appear to have declined during the Maraboutic Crisis.

B. Seeking Knowledge and the Nāṣiriyya’s Early Expansion

Ibn Nāṣir’s scholarly reputation began spreading while he was still serving his masters al-Raqqī and al-Anṣārī. Biographical sources note that he taught several students during this period, including ʿAbd al-Mālik al-Tajmū’atī (d. 1118/1706)\textsuperscript{33} and Muḥammad b. Mubārak al-Sijilmāsī (d. 1090/1679), who traveled to Darʿa from Sijilmāsa. Additionally, Ibn Nāṣir’s didactic poem, Musā adat al-Ikhwān,\textsuperscript{34} circulated outside of Darʿa during this period. The Sūsī jurist Yabūrak al-Samlālī (d. 1058/1648) wrote a commentary on this text in 1642/1052, the year of Ibn Nāṣir’s departure from Tamgrūt.\textsuperscript{35} In his introduction, al-Samlālī notes the poem was brought to him by a group of local students who had, presumably, traveled to Tamgrūt or learned of Ibn Nāṣir’s

\textsuperscript{32} al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Afwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 272-3.
\textsuperscript{33} al-Ziriklī, al-ʿAlām, v. 4, 164.
\textsuperscript{34} References to manuscript copies of this work are included in Chapter 3.
works from peers who had journeyed to study in Dar’a. Ibn Nāṣir attracted more students after becoming shaykh of the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya. These included the Sūsī scholars Ibrāhīm al-Sibā’ī (d. 1135/1723), Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī who came to Tamgrūt as a youth, as well as the aforementioned al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī who would become one of Ibn Nāṣir’s most famous disciples. al-Hashtūkī writes that al-Yūsī heard about Ibn Nāṣir while teaching in Tārūdant and hurried to meet the shaykh in Tamgrūt:

Then [al-Yūsī] heard news about the qūtb, my leader and master, Ibn Nāṣir and about his committed striving to spread knowledge, revive the sunna, and eradicate unlawful innovations. So he left his post behind him to travel to the shaykh, the qūtb. When he reached him, he was overjoyed. [al-Yūsī] attained all that he has now from [Ibn Nāṣir’s] blessing.

al-Yūsī was drawn to Ibn Nāṣir by virtue of his scholarship and fidelity to the sunna. When he arrived in Tamgrūt in 1650/1660, there was little the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya could offer besides shelter and the opportunity to study and train under Ibn Nāṣir. During his time in Tamgrūt, he studied grammar, jurisprudence and language arts with Ibn Nāṣir. He also benefitted from his teacher’s spiritual guidance. One of al-Yūsī’s biographers writes that Ibn Nāṣir was his spiritual “doctor” who “cured his [inner] illness.”

al-Hashtūkī writes, “[Ibn Nāṣir] filled [al-Yūsī’s] ocean with his blessing (baraka) and so magnified him and his station.” And as al-Yūsī himself wrote, “This shaykh [i.e. Ibn Nāṣir] is the one to whom I gave my allegiance, and from whom I took my litany and I

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38 Amālīk, Jawānib, v. 2, 238.
ascrbe myself to him. Everyone [of my other teachers] is mentioned [merely] based on some benefit I gained from him."  

al-Yūsī would go on to be one of the Nāṣirīyya’s most important missionaries in the 11th/17th century. After studying in Tamgrūt he moved to the Dilā’iyya zāwiya in Morocco’s Middle Atlas. However, he never lost his connection to Ibn Nāṣir or the Nāṣirīyya. In 1665/1076 al-Yūsī traveled to Tamgrūt to bid his master farewell before his second pilgrimage to Mecca. After the Dilā’iyya zāwiya’s destruction by Mawlay al-Rashīd al-ʿAlawī in 1078/1668, al-Yūsī was forced to move to Fez. Here, he continued to teach and rose to prominence in the city’s scholarly circles. At this time, Ibn Nāṣir decided to send his sons ʿAlī and Muḥammad to Fez to study. He placed them in al-Yūsī’s care, instructing him to focus on their studies.  

He also gave al-Yūsī permission to induct new members of the Nāṣirīyya. This helped establish a Nāṣirī community in the city. al-Yūsī continued to propagate the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood in Marrākush when he moved there in 1674/1085. ʿAmālik writes that his home served as the first Nāṣirīyya zāwiya in the city.  

al-Yūsī’s connection to the Nāṣirīyya continued after Ibn Nāṣir’s death in 1674/1085. In 1685/1096, al-Yūsī performed the ḥajj pilgrimage with Ibn Nāṣir’s son, Ahmad al-Khalīfa. Later, he played a key role in founding the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya in Tetouan in 1691/1102, along with his student Ibn Zakūr al-Fāsī (d. 1120/1708) and Shaykh ʿAlī Baraka al-Tīṭawānī (d. 1120/1708).  

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43 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 239.
45 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 240.
al-Yūsī was just one of Ibn Nāṣir’s pupils who played an important role as a Nāṣirī evangelizer in the 11th/17th century. Ḍhmād b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tastāwutī (d. 1127/1715) came to know of Ibn Nāṣir while studying with al-Yūsī at the Dilāʿīyya zāwiya before traveling to the Tamgrūt in 1671/1081.46 al-Tastāwutī developed a deep bond with his shaykh who granted him permission to spread the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood on his own. Like al-Yūsī, al-Tastāwutī spent much of the latter 17th century traveling around Morocco and was responsible for establishing Nāṣirī communities in the port city of Sale and elsewhere around the country.47 Other influential early Nāṣirī students include the aforementioned Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī,48 who studied with al-Yūsī for nearly 20 years, as well as the aforementioned Muḥammad b. Mubārak al-Sijilmāsī.49

The prominent role played by these students in spreading the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood during its formative period reflects Ibn Nāṣir’s focus on developing the Tamgrūt zāwiya as a scholarly and spiritual center. The practice of seeking knowledge brought abundant visitors to the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya. Time spent in Tamgrūt allowed students to learn and be acculturated into the Nāṣirīyya’s scrupulous religious practice. Students like al-Hashtūkī spent many years studying in Tamgrūt whereas others like al-Yūsī or al-Tastāwutī successfully demonstrated their grasp of Ibn Nāṣir’s teachings during shorter visits. Ibn Nāṣir delegated the task of propagating his religious teachings to

48 al-Hashtūkī’s role as a Nāṣirī evangelizer along the overland hajj route and in the Sahara will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively.
49 As the mufti of Sijilmāsī, Muḥammad b. Mubārak helped to spread the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood in the Sahara. Notably, he is a key link in the Nāṣirī sanad of Ibn Abī Zayyān al-Qandūṣī, who led a Nāṣirī-affiliated zāwiya in Qanādsā, Algeria. See discussion in Chapters 4 and 5.
successful students like these. An exception to this trend was the establishment of the Nāṣirī hajj caravan in 1659/1070. During his two pilgrimages, Ibn Nāṣir taught and propagated his order in rural communities along the overland hajj route as well as in major cities in North Africa and the Middle East. Consequently, by the time of his death in 1674/1085, the Nāṣiriyya had spread throughout Morocco and the Northwest Sahara, and had adepts in Libya, Egypt and the Arabian peninsula.\(^{50}\)

A. The Nāṣiriyya’s Expansion under Aḥmad al-Khalīfa (1085-1129/1674-1717)

Ibn Nāṣir’s death ushered in a new era in the Nāṣiriyya’s growth in Morocco and abroad. Before dying, Ibn Nāṣir appointed his fourth son, Aḥmad, as his successor. This choice was rejected by Ibn Nāṣir’s three eldest sons who left Tamgrūt after their father’s death to lead their own zāwiyyas. The eldest, Muḥammad al-Kabīr (d. 1126/1714) settled near Khenifra in the Middle Atlas mountains.\(^ {51}\) The second oldest, ʿAlī (d. 1109/1697), established a zāwiya in Awlūz in the Sūs,\(^ {52}\) and the third oldest, Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr (d. 1120/1708), moved to zāwiyat al-Baraka, one of the Nāṣirī branches establish by Ibn Nāṣir just north of Tamgrūt.\(^ {53}\) Surprisingly, this division did not precipitate a crisis within the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood. Though relations between Ibn Nāṣir’s four sons remained cool during the duration of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure,\(^ {54}\) their dispersion only increased the

\(^{50}\) Nāṣirī activities during the overland hajj are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.
\(^{54}\) Amālik disputes efforts by later Nāṣirī historians to downplay the depth of the brothers’ disagreement. Rather, he notes that when ʿAlī b. Maḥammad b. Nāṣir died in the Sūs only
Nāṣirīyya’s influence. None of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s brothers deviated from their father’s religious teachings and they all continued to transmit Ibn Nāṣir’s litanies. Consequently, the zāwiya they founded did not compete with Tamgrūt but served to further extend Nāṣirī teachings outside of the Darʿa Valley. In this way, the departure of Ibn Nāṣir’s eldest sons presaged the Nāṣirīyya’s wide expansion under its second shaykh.

Aḥmad al-Khalīfa continued his father’s model of developing the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt and delegating the brotherhood’s expansion to his students. As was the case under Ibn Nāṣir, gift giving remained one of the lodge’s key revenue streams. However, Ḥamīd al-Khalīfa’s tenure, gift giving between Nāṣirī branches in Morocco and the ‘mother’ zāwiya in Tamgrūt became routinized. During this period, Nāṣirī branches in Darʿa, the Sūs and the Atlas Mountains established annual caravans to send gifts of cooking oil, dates, wool, other sundries, and gold and silver to the Tamgrūt zāwiya. The regular flow of goods and currency into Tamgrūt led to a substantial expansion in the zāwiya’s property holdings. Historians estimate that, during al-Khalīfa’s tenure, the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya came to possess 1200 hectares of irrigated land and 35,000 palm trees, equal to 5% of all irrigated land and 22% of palm trees along the western bank of the Darʿa River. Like his father, al-Khalīfa sought to redistribute these resources for the benefit of his zāwiya’s residents and surrounding community.

Muḥammad al-Kabīr and Muḥammad al-Saghīr attended his funeral. See Ḥamīd, Jawānīb, v. 1, 119.

55 Ḥamīd, Jawānīb, v. 1, 120.
al-Khalīfa’s biographers emphasize his striving (ijtihād) to improve the Tamgrūt zāwiya’s capacity for hosting students and guests as well as the redistribution of “benefits” (manāfi’) to the surrounding community. 58 He embarked on a series of works projects to improve the Tamgrūt lodge. This included a new minaret for its congregational mosque, a mosque for female adepts as well as several new prayer spaces. Additionally, he dug new wells, planted gardens and constructed shops. He also built a new public bath which operated night and day to provide residents and wayfarers with facilities to bathe and refresh themselves. However, al-Khalīfa’s crowning achievements were the construction of a dormitory, madrasa and library for the zāwiya’s growing population of students and scholars. 59 Beyond Tamgrūt, al-Khalīfa directly established a number of local branch zāwiyas to expand the Nāṣirīyya’s influence in the Dar’a Valley. The best known of these was zāwiya al-Faḍl which al-Khalīfa founded a few kilometers south of Tamgrūt in 1115/1703. 60 As with the other branches he established, zāwiya al-Faḍl was equipped with a mosque, a well and shops in accordance with the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s institutional model. Nāṣirī writers praised its lush gardens. 61 Zāwiya al-Faḍl also had a library, indicating that at least some of these branches functioned as educational centers. 62 Additionally, al-Khalīfa provided a salary for a full-time imām and preacher (khaṭīb) who served to transmit the brotherhood’s religious teachings.

60 al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar al-Muraṣṣa’ā, v. 1, 170, nt. 5.
62 This library was established by Āḥmad al-Hashtūkī, who left his personal library to the zāwiya in his will. See discussion in Chapter 3.
appointed one of his wives, Zaynab, to manage the zāwiya’s property.\textsuperscript{63} Amālik notes that Nāṣirī shaykhīs founded around 20 of these local branches in Dar’a in the 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} centuries. These zāwiya\text勇士 played an important role in facilitating the movement of Nāṣirī adepts and merchants in the region.\textsuperscript{64}

The Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s material growth at this time was reflected in a concomitant expansion of its brotherhood’s spiritual and scholarly influence. Like his father, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa was highly respected as a scholar of ḥadīth. Similarly, Ibn Nāṣir’s students, al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī and ‘Abd al-Mālik al-Tajmū’ī, gained recognition for their legal opinions designating the heterodox ‘Akākiza Sufi community as atheists (zanāḏiqa) during the reign of Mawlay al-Rashīd al-‘Alawī.\textsuperscript{65} Though Mawlay al-Rashīd ignored their opinions, his successor Mawlay Ismā’il used them to justify military action against the ‘Akākiza.\textsuperscript{66} During this period, al-Yūsī also composed his famous critique of Mawlay Ismā’il’s despotic rule.\textsuperscript{67} At the same time, Nāṣirī scholars were also at the center of the ‘students’ crisis’ (fitnat al-ṭalaba) which occurred in Sijilmāsā when Muḥammad b. ‘Umar b. Abī Maḥallī (d.c. 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century), one of Ibn Nāṣir’s former

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\textsuperscript{64} ‘Amālik, \textit{Jawānīb}, v. 2, 408. Maḥammad b. Nāṣir is credited with establishing at least one of these, a zāwiya north of Tamgrūt that later became a receiving point for Nāṣirī adepts arriving from the Sūs. See al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, \textit{al-Durar al-Muraṣṣa‘a}, v. 1, 170, nt. 2.
\textsuperscript{65} Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī records the text of both of these fatwas in his first ḥajj diary. See al-Hashtūkī, “Ḥidāyat al-Malik al-‘Allām”, folios 71-86.
\textsuperscript{66} See Najmī, \textit{al-Taṣawwuf wa-l-Bid’a}.
\textsuperscript{67} The text of this letter is preserved in “Nāṣirī Letters”, 28-35. al-Yūsī’s confrontation with Mawlay Ismā’il is well-known. Clifford Geertz used folk tales about this confrontation as the basis of his arguments about the power of “charisma” or baraka in Morocco’s religious and political field. In \textit{Religion and Power in Morocco}, Munson thoroughly analyzes Geertz’s arguments as well as the text of al-Yūsī’s letter. See Clifford Geertz, \textit{Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia}, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971); Henry Munson Jr., \textit{Religion and Power in Morocco} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), especially 1-31.
\end{small}
students, declared the city’s scholarly class to be disbelievers.\footnote{Maḥammad b. Nāṣir dispatched his son Muḥammad al-Kabīr to quell this unrest. See “Nāṣirī Letters”, 140-1.} By the early 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century, Nāṣirī scholarly communities in Marrakech, the Sūs, Tetouan and Sale were also established.\footnote{A table of Nāṣirī communities across Morocco is included in the Appendix.} As was his father’s case, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa delegated the Nāṣirīyya’s propagation to his students. The 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century Nāṣirī biographical dictionary, al-Durra al-Jalīla, records the names of 220 of al-Khalīfa’s adepts who were associated with 79 Nāṣirī branch zāwiyas.\footnote{al-Khalīfatī, al-Durra al-Jalīla, v. 1, 55, 75.} Though this source is not comprehensive, it attests to the brotherhood’s wide diffusion in Morocco by the beginning of the 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century. The Nāṣirīyya’s influence along the overland hajj route, and in the Sahara, also intensified during al-Khalīfa’s lifetime and in the decades after his death.\footnote{The Nāṣirīyya’s transregional spread is the subject of Chapters 4 and 5.}

\textit{Nāṣirī Branches in 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century Morocco: Organization and Composition}

Though there is no comprehensive account of the number of Nāṣirī branch zāwiyas established during Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s lifetimes, estimates based on multiple sources place this number at around 120 lodges. Most of these were in Morocco, concentrated around the Nāṣirīyya’s main lodge in Tamgrūt as well as in the neighboring Sūs region. After these areas, the Middle Atlas Mountains and the plains surrounding Marrākush – the hawz – saw the next highest concentration of Nāṣirī branches. We find evidence during this period of Nāṣirī communities existing in
all of Morocco’s major cities, in the Rif mountains and among tribal groups stretching as far as the Sahara.

Figure 2.1: Estimated Locations of Nāṣirī Branch Lodges in Morocco, c. 12th/18th century

As the Nāṣirīyya spread widely during this period, it succeeded in attracting adepts from all segments of 11th/17th century Moroccan society. Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad

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72 This map is based on our survey of the available primary and secondary sources. The blue markers represent the known locations of Nāṣirī branch lodges. The main Nāṣirīyya zāwiyā in Tamgrūt is shown by the red circle bearing a white star. As mentioned above, al-Durra al-Jalīla refers to 79 Nāṣirī branches in Morocco. Based on his interviews at the Nasiriyya zāwiyā in the 20th century, George Spillman produced a list of 22 Nāṣirī affiliated communities across Morocco. al-Mukhtar al-Sūsī also refers to numerous Nāṣir communities in the Sūs beginning in the 12th/18th century. The Nāṣirīyya also established a presence in 28 locations along the overland ḥajj route. See al-Khalīfī, al-Durra al-Jalīla; Spillmann, Esquisse b’histoire religieuse du Maroc; Muḥammad al-Mukhtar al-Sūsī, al-Ma’sūl, 20 vols. (Casablanca: Maṭba‘at al-Najāḥ, 1960); Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Dā‘ī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, ed. ʿAbd al-Hafīz Mulūkī (Abu Dhabi, U.A.E.: Dar al-Suwaydī, 2011).
al-Khalīfa’s letters provide rich details about the brotherhood’s translocal organization and composition. This correspondence underlines the Nāṣirī Shaykh’s role as the brotherhood’s overarching leader. His authority, derived from his station as God’s vicegerent (khalīfa), was demonstrated through his knowledge and piety, especially the emulation of the Prophetic sunna.\(^{73}\) The Nāṣirīyya’s Shaykh appointed local delegates (sing. muqaddam) to lead Nāṣirī communities outside of Tamgrūt. Their authority came from the shaykh’s endorsement of their position.\(^{74}\) Nāṣirī delegates were granted substantial leeway in conducting their affairs as long as they upheld the brotherhood’s principles. Both Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa used correspondence to check in with these local representatives, offer guidance and remind them of their responsibilities. The shaykhs also responded to requests for advice and prayer, helped coordinate the management of branch zāwiya resources and intervened in intra-branch conflicts. But they preferred to lead indirectly and only rarely visited local branches for administrative reasons.\(^{75}\)

During these two shaykh’s tenures, the Nāṣirīyya grew to include local affiliates in Morocco’s major cities, rural areas as well as pastoralist tribes. Within these varied social settings, the composition of Nāṣirī communities appears to have remained the same. In their correspondence, the Nāṣirī leaders use general terms like “our brothers” and “the community of love” (ahl al-maḥabba) to address all members of their order.

\(^{74}\) For an example of a typical letter of appointment for a Nāṣirī muqaddam, see “Nāṣirī Letters”, 79-80.
\(^{75}\) Indirect governance began to change towards the end of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure. al-Khalīfa was less liberal in allowing muqaddams to induct new members to the order. His disciplinary measure against the Qanādsā zāwiya while returning from ḥajj in 1122/1710, foreshadowed the Nāṣirīyya’s shift towards more direct control of their branches. See discussion in Chapter 4.
equally. This universal fellowship comprised several distinct groups that existed within a special social hierarchy. At the top were the local delegates and religious scholars.

Several of al-Khalīfa’s letters contain both a specific message for a local muqaddam and a general counsel to be conveyed to their congregation, either through oral recitation or other means. Religious scholars, referred to either as ʿulamāʾ or mutafaqqihūn, appear to have worked alongside the muqaddam to further the Nāṣirīya educational and spiritual missions. For example, one of Ahmad al-Khalīfa’s letters to the Nāṣirī branch in Sale includes his directions for scholars there to engage with and guide the adepts (fuqarāʾ) and general community (al-ikhwān, ahl al-maḥabba). al-Khalīfa writes:

I advise our noble scholars to meet with their brothers from time to time to make them aware of their religion and that which will rectify their religious and worldly affairs. This is so that you can be partners to one another in commerce. For any deed that does not accord with guidelines set by the Prophet Muhammad (al-manhaj al-muḥammadī) will be rejected, outwardly and inwardly, and returned to its owner.

Other letters make reference to students (ṭalaba) and adepts (fuqarāʾ) as distinct Nāṣirī subgroups apart from the general community. We see this in the follow missive from al-Khalīfa to the Nāṣirī community in Marrakech:

In the name of God, the Merciful and All-Merciful, and may God’s peace and blessing be upon the Prophet Muḥammad and his family. To all of our brothers, the people of love (ahl al-maḥabba, and our special friends and lovers in Marrakech, especially our noble students (sādātunā al-ṭalaba): Peace be upon you, as well as God’s mercy, blessing, good pleasure, and His salutations. Indeed, I praise God for you, it is He, there is no deity save Him To proceed, our brother,
beloved and special friend, al-Ḥājj Abū Sitta has arrived in our company safely and soundly. He mentioned you all to us, praised your goodness and described your state to us. He also asked us to pray with you: May God facilitate your attainment of goodness and designate you for goodness and make you among the people of His special care, from among the scholars who practice what they know… by His bounty. As for our brothers, the adepts (al-fuqarā’), I specify you for God’s blessings and His sanctified salutations, and I praise God for you, it is He, there is no deity save He, the God of the Earth and the Heavens.81

While these distinctions are subtle, they show us that the Nāširiyya brotherhood was not homogeneous. While the brotherhood’s most prominent members were its scholars and students seeking to become scholars, it also included business people and individuals dedicated to worshipping God at the expense of pursuing knowledge or careers. The relationship between these groups was symbiotic. Scholars taught students and advised business people about how to conduct business according to the sharīʿa and sunna. A share of the profits from these commercial activities could be used to support the local Nāṣirī community or be sent to the main zāwiya in Tamgrūt. Nāṣirī leaders could utilize these funds knowing they had been gained in a licit and spiritually sound manner. These revenues supported the pious endowments that formed the basis of each Nāṣirī zāwiya’s property holdings. They also supported dependent populations, like students and fuqarā’, whose studies and worship regimens precluded them from economic activity. In addition to local delegates, scholars, students and fuqarā’, the Nāṣirī community also included servants, slaves and women.

The Nāširiyya brotherhood actively engaged in the slave trade. Gutelius writes that during al-Khalīfa’s tenure the Nāširiyya zāwiya owned around 1200 slaves who worked as agricultural laborers, domestic servants, craftspeople and concubines.82 Nāṣirī

81 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 104.
82 Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 105.
branches outside of Dar’a also engaged in the slave trade. Āḥmad Ṭāhir ‘Amālik writes that the Nāṣiriyya played a key role in maintaining the slave trade in the Sūs region during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.\textsuperscript{83} al-Khalīfa’s letters document the coordination of this trade between Tamgrūt and its local branches across Morocco. A series of messages between the Nāṣirī Shaykh and his affiliates in Rabāṭ show their attempts to recover an escaped slave and return him to the Tamgrūt zāwīya.\textsuperscript{84} It’s not clear from these letters or other sources whether slaves were inducted into the Nāṣirī order. However, sources from the late 12th/18th century show that, while slave populations had succeeded in increasing their social influence in Tamgrūt, this development garnered substantial criticism.\textsuperscript{85}

A. Women’s Role in the Nāṣiriyya Order

As discussed above, the Nāṣiriyya viewed their community as organized within a hierarchy of obedience and responding to higher authority. This hierarchy granted women a definite station within the Nāṣirī community. Women were expected to obey the Nāṣirī shaykh, their teachers and their husbands. While the presence of women within Nāṣirī sources is limited, the available information demonstrates their active contributions to the Nāṣiriyya’s religious missions. Nāṣirī leaders recognized women’s religious autonomy, their capability in administrative roles and guaranteed their right to education. However, available sources document a limited set of well-defined roles for Nāṣirī women. Nonetheless, the brotherhood recognized that their contributions were needed to maintain a balanced and functional religious community.

\textsuperscript{83} Ṭāhir ‘Amālik, Jawāniḥ, v. 3, 597.
\textsuperscript{84} “Nāṣirī Letters”, 188-90.
\textsuperscript{85} Muḥammad b. ‘Abbād al-Salām al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Mazāyā, 100, 104-6, and especially 176.
From the brotherhood’s inception, Nāṣirī women were given roles administering zāwiya properties and distributing food to residents and guests. Nāṣirī sources almost always describe these duties as forms of charitable service. As we saw above, Ibn Nāsir’s establishment of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya coincided with his marriage to Ḥafṣa bt. ‘Abd Allāh al-Anṣārīyya, the widow of his former master, Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī.\(^\text{86}\)

Aḥmad al-Khalīfa was their son. In a narration, al-Khalīfa recounts his mother’s dream in which the spirits of her late husband, his late teacher and her mother encouraged her to marry Ibn Nāsir. He writes that, when her mother appeared to her, she was carrying the keys to the Tamgrūt zāwiya. Ḥafṣa’s mother told her, “O Ḥafṣa! O my dear! The guests are sleeping in the zāwiya without any dinner! O Ḥafṣa! O my dear! Do you want the zāwiya to be lost?”\(^\text{87}\) al-Khalīfa goes on to praise his mother for her service and piety:

> Our mother [Ḥafṣa bt. ‘Abd Allāh], may God bless her with mercy, dedicated herself to the utmost worship and service on the behalf of her fellow Muslims. She slept only some of the night [in order to pray night prayers] and was constant in observing obligatory prayers at their times. She remembered God often – her tongue was never idle from His remembrance – and did not fear anyone’s reproach due to her faith in God… She was very generous. From her father she inherited gardens, houses and wealth with which she purchased slaves, maidservants and more property. She gave all of this away as charity and freed all of her slaves.\(^\text{88}\)

In this way, Ḥafṣa bt. ‘Abd Allāh set the example for later Nāṣirī women who were expected to strive for similar levels of piety, worship and charitable service.

Like his father, al-Khalīfa employed his wives in administrative positions at the Tamgrūt zāwiya and other Nāṣirī branches in Dar’a. He appointed his wife Zaynab bt. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tinirdīyya as the overseer of zāwiya al-Faḍl which al-Khalīfa

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constructed near to Tamgrūt.\textsuperscript{89} He also instructed his wife Fāṭima to oversee the Tamgrūt zāwiya’s book collection while he was traveling on hajj.\textsuperscript{90} Additionally, sources indicate that Nāširī zāwiya provided spaces for women to worship and learn. Aḥmad al-Khalīfa is credited with constructing a mosque for women at the Nāširīyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt.\textsuperscript{91} The zāwiya’s tomb complex also contains the remains of several women who served as teachers and spiritual guides at the lodge since its foundation.\textsuperscript{92} Aḥmad ʿAmālik writes that, after the Nāširī community in Marrākush established their second zāwiya in the later 11th/17th century, the location of their first lodge was turned into a gathering space for female Nāširī adepts.\textsuperscript{93} Similarly, he writes that documents from the 13th/19th century show that the Nāširīyya zāwiya in Fez supported both a male and a female muqaddam. He notes that this was a unique practice among Moroccan Sufi lodges during this period.\textsuperscript{94} This evidence suggests that women played important and long-lasting roles in the Nāširīyya brotherhood’s mission and activities.

The “Nāširī Letters” contain several pieces of correspondence between Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and female adepts. Sometimes he wrote to them directly; at other times he sent messages through their husbands.\textsuperscript{95} These documents shed light on the Nāširī vision of female piety. In a long letter to the wives and servants of Aḥmad b. Ḥurmat Allāh al-Ḥīmyarī, al-Khalīfa emphasizes the values of worship, service and modesty. He begins

\textsuperscript{89} al-Makkī al-Nāširī, \textit{al-Durar al-Muraṣṣaʿa`a}, v. 1, 171.
\textsuperscript{90} “Nāširī Letters”, 98-9.
\textsuperscript{92} Field Research in Tamgrūt, December, 2016.
\textsuperscript{93} This was al-Ḥasan al-Ṯūsī’s former home, see: ʿAmālik, v. 3, 684.
\textsuperscript{94} ʿAmālik, \textit{Jawāniḥ}, v. 3, 679.
\textsuperscript{95} “Nāširī Letters”, 158. In this letter al-Khalīfa responds directly to an anonymous woman’s request for induction into the Nāširī order.
his letter with the same advice given to all of his adepts: have reverence (taqwā) for God and maintain your prayers. He instructs them, however, to do so only after they’ve rectified their understanding of theology (‘aqīda). He says they should strive to absorb this understanding into their “flesh and blood” without excessive contemplation (fikr) about theological concepts.⁹⁶ He then counsels the women to be modest and to stay at home unless necessary. He directs their focus towards managing their homes, educating their children and serving their husbands, as well as the residents and guests of their zāwiya in Dukkāla. al-Khalīfā warns the women of the punishment for backbiting and other antisocial behaviors as he exhorts them to focus on excelling in their domestic service.⁹⁷ He reminds them that doing so, with the intention to please God, will entitle them to an equal share of the reward earned by the students, scholars and worshippers they support. He also instructs the women to appoint a leader among themselves to help coordinate their efforts.⁹⁸ Lastly, he reminds them of the importance of focusing on worship, instructing them to perform prayers together when they are able and to never let their tongues be idle from the remembrance (dhikr) of God.⁹⁹

This letter highlights this different expectation that al-Khalīfā held for his female students. He counsels al-Ḥimyarī’s wives to concentrate their efforts in the domestic sphere and avoid public life. Yet, he affirms their autonomy within this space. He instructs them to lead themselves and worship together. However, this autonomy is limited, as he reminds the wives that they should obey their husbands and seek their

⁹⁶ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 122.
⁹⁷ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 123.
⁹⁸ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 124.
felicity through service and worship. al-Khalīfa’s letter also raises questions about the Nāṣirīyya’s views on women’s education. He instructs al-Ḥimyarī’s wives to understand the theology behind their worship but not to delve too deeply into its nuances. This differs from the encouragement of scholarship found in al-Khalīfa’s and Ibn Nāsir’s letters to their male adepts and in their general, public messages. Despite this contrast, there is clear evidence that the Nāṣirīyya supported women’s education. In a letter to tribal groups on Morocco’s Atlantic Coast, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir provides a clear statement of his support for women’s education:

Do not look down on the weak and the poor… feed them from what you eat, dress them as you dress, and teach them what they do not know of their religion. This is obligatory upon you, just as it is obligatory for you to teach your sons, your wives, your daughters and whomever Allah has placed in your care. You will be asked about this on the Day of Judgment.¹⁰⁰

Here, Ibn Nāsir places wives and daughters among the dependents whose needs are to be met by his male adepts. This includes education, at least to an elementary level, which is likely the level of learning described more metaphorically by al-Khalīfa in his letter above. An example of this education can be found in Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s daughter Umm Kulthūm whose biography was written by her brother Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and preserved by the author of al-Durar al-Murasṣa’a.¹⁰¹ al-Khalīfa writes that his sister memorized Ibn Nāṣir’s devotional poem Wasīlat al-ʿAbd al-Munīb and his didactic poem on Mālikī jurisprudence, Musāʿadat al-Ikhwān. Additionally, he says Umm Kulthūm completed multiple full recitations of the Qur’an and studied ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-

¹⁰⁰ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 43.
¹⁰¹ al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar al-Murasṣa’a, v. 1, 313-4. She died of plague in 1091/1680 and was survived by her son Dāwūd.
Waghlīsī’s (d. 786/1384) poem on elementary theology and jurisprudence. She was also fond of reciting Sharaf al-Dīn al-Būṣīrī’s (d. 696/1295) al-Burda, a well-known panegyrical of the Prophet Muḥammad. Clearly, Umm Kultūm was literate and studied the knowledge required to properly perform her worship. But she was not considered to be a religious scholar.

Several factors may have limited Umm Kultūm’s scholarly career. As we have seen, Nāṣīrī women were expected to provide service to their families and communities rather than seek knowledge. This service was necessary for the zawiyā to fulfill its charitable and scholarly mission. As such, the pursuit of formal, scholarly education was neither expected nor intended for women in the Nāṣīrī milieu. However, this did not prevent them from learning what they needed for their own personal and spiritual development. They were also educated sufficiently to teach their children and fellow sisters. In al-Khalīfa’s aforementioned letter, he instructs his female audience to dedicate themselves to providing a wholesome moral education for their children. Here, al-Khalīfa employs the word tarbiya, which refers to child-rearing or training, in contrast to taʾlīm, which refers to the transmission of book knowledge. al-Khalīfa does employ taʾlīm in other letters to describe the educational responsibilities of male adepts and delegates. While men were encouraged to pursue scholarly careers, women were encouraged to educate themselves for their personal benefit and their families. Despite the disparity in these opportunities, this did not prevent Nāṣīrī women from becoming scholars or saints, though their activities remained largely confined to informal or spiritual settings.

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102 al-Nāṣīrī, al-Durar al-Muraṣṣa’a, v. 1, 313.
Margaret Rausch has shed light on the role of Moroccan Berber women as teachers and scholars in the Southern Sūs region. She writes that Sūsī women have, for centuries, played an important role transmitting Islamic knowledge through didactic poems composed in Tashellḥīt, the local Berber dialect. Many female scholars were itinerant and traveled from village to village teaching in private homes and sometimes to mixed audiences. While Rausch focuses on contemporary women scholars from the Darqawiyya Sufi order, women from the Nāṣiriyya order likely played similar roles in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. This scholarly and spiritual tradition supported the careers of male scholars and female saints and scholars who performed roles similar to those described by Rausch. One such woman was Fāṭima bint Muḥammad al-Hilāliyya (d. 1207/1792-3) who was considered to be the leading female Sufi saint of her time as well as an accomplished jurist. Fāṭima, a student of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, is known to have composed devotional and didactic poems in Tashellḥīt. After her death, her tomb became a popular destination for Nāṣiri adepts who sought to benefit from her spiritual blessing (baraka).

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105 Rausch, 179.
106 Rausch, 179.
107 Rausch, 173. The Nāṣiriyya order spread widely in the Sūs soon after the brotherhood’s foundation. Historian al-Mukhtar al-Sūsī writes that, by the 12th/18th century, “all” scholars in the Sūs were affiliated with the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood. It was only at the beginning of the 13th/19th century that the Darqawiyya order competed with and overtook the Nasiriyaa in many areas of the Sūs.” See al-Sūsī, al-Maṣūl, v. 14, 17. The Nāṣiriyya’s decline at the hands of the Darqawiyya is discussed in more detail in the conclusion.
109 Ḥūriya bint Qāda, “Rāʾidāt Maḥribiyīyat Ḥūriya bint Qāda”
Moroccan historian Lambârak Ayt 'Adî writes that female Sufis in the Sûs played an important roles attracting and educating female adepts, providing food and shelter at zâwiyyas, practicing medicine and interceding for individuals and communities in danger or need.\(^{111}\) He cites al-Mukhtar al-Sûsî’s estimate that the Ayt Šawwâb territory in the Western Sûs was home to approximately 3,200 female Sufis during the first half of the 20\(^{th}\) century.\(^{112}\) Since the 11\(^{th}/17\(^{th}\) century, Aît Šawwâb had been home to a thriving Nâṣirî scholarly community led by the Sûs’ leading hadîth scholar, Ahmad al-Šawwâbî (d. 1149/1737).\(^{113}\) Though it’s impossible to conclude that al-Sûsî’s estimate reflects the Nâṣirîyya’s spread among women in the Sûs centuries prior, we can say the brotherhood was actively engaged in women’s education and that Nâṣirî scholars – possibly both male and female – dominated cultural life in the Sûs during the 11\(^{th}/17\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}/18\(^{th}\) centuries.

The Nâṣirîyya brotherhood provided definite, but limited, avenues of participation for its female adepts. The Nâṣirîyya’s leaders encouraged their female adepts to learn what they needed to properly practice their religion and to serve their husbands, families and communities. While few Nâṣirî women are recorded in historical sources, those who are mentioned are remembered for their outstanding piety and service. Some of these women are known to have taught and composed scholarly works, though these efforts were usually confined to female audiences. However, these limitations did not reduce the importance of Nâṣirî women’s role in the brotherhood’s mission and activities. The practice of hospitality and distributing food (iṭām al-ṭaʿām) was central to the very


\(^{112}\) Ayt ‘Adî, 368.

\(^{113}\) See discussion below on Nâṣirî communities in the Sûs.
concept of the Moroccan Sufi lodge. There is little doubt that sufficient female support was essential to the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s success in fulfilling this social responsibility. In addition, the brotherhood’s continuous history of providing spaces for female adepts and even female local delegates (muqaddamāt) further indicates women’s important presence in the Nāṣirīyya order despite their limited appearance in public.

B. Nāṣirī Expansion in Morocco’s Countryside and Cities

The Nāṣirīyya brotherhood first attracted students and adepts from rural communities near to Darʿa, along Morocco’s Eastern and Southern Saharan frontiers. As we saw above, many of Ibn Nāṣir’s earliest students came from the neighboring Sūs region. Scholars like Ibrāhīm al-Sabāʿī, Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī and Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Tāракunftī came to Tamgrūt in the 1050s/1640s and 1060s/1650s. However, many of these scholars did not return to their homes after completing their studies. al-Sibāʾī and al-Tāракunftī stayed in Tamgrūt and al-Hashtūkī went on to study with al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī at the Dilāʾīyya zāwiya. Despite the longstanding connection between scholars in the Sūs and Tamgrūt, it was not until after Ibn Nāṣir’s death that the Nāṣirīyya established branches in the Sūs. The Nāṣirīyya’s earliest expansion outside of Darʿa occurred in the neighboring Tāfilālt, home to Sijilmāsa. The strong connections forged by the Nāṣirīyya with communities in Sijilmāsa were based on Ibn Nāṣir’s close identification with Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī. Likewise, Ibn Nāṣir had taught scholars from Sijilmāsa prior to beginning his career as the Nāṣirīyya’s shaykh. Among these were ʿAbd al-Mālik al-Tājmūʿatī and Mubārak b. Muḥammad al-Sijilmāsī. Likewise, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī (d. 1090/1679) brought the Nāṣirī order to his family’s zāwiya in the foothills of the Middle
Atlas Mountains to the northwest of Sijilmāsa. Ibn Nāṣir himself established Nāṣirī communities in Figīg and elsewhere in the Tāfilālt during his two hajj pilgrimages in 1070/1660 and 1077/1667.

The Nāṣirīyya’s expansion in urban areas began after the establishment of the ‘Alawite dynasty in 1078/1668. That year saw the destruction of the Dilā’iyya zāwiya. A spiritual and scholarly center of similar stature to Tamgrūt, its destruction was accompanied by the exile its scholarly community to the ‘Alawite capital of Fez. It was here that al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī first began transmitting the Nāṣirī order at Ibn Nāṣir’s instruction. The Nāṣirīyya spread to other urban communities during Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure as šaykh. During this period, al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī helped to establish Nāṣirī branches in Marrakech and Tetouan. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Tastāwūtī established the Nāṣirī community in the Atlantic port of Sale at this time as well.

While rural and urban Nāṣirī communities shared similar social compositions and a common commitment to the Nāṣirīyya’s religious teachings, their treatment by Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa appears to have differed. The high volume of correspondence between Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and his adepts in urban centers indicates his particular concern about managing these communities’ affairs. Chief among the reasons for this attention were their wealth. It is only with urban communities that we find al-Khalīfa discussing local lodges’ transactions and the transportation of goods to

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114 See the biography of his son, Ḥamza, in al-Khalīfatī, al-Durra al-Jalīla, v. 2, 379.
115 Aḥmad al-Ḥashṭūkī mentions his meeting with Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, the qāḍī of Figīg, who was appointed as the Nāṣirī muqaddam in the area by Muḥammad b. Nāṣir. See “Ḥidāyat al-Malik al-‘Alām”, folio 108.
116 For more on this history, see Ḥajjī, al-Zāwiya al-Dilā’iyya, 248ff.
In addition, urban Nāṣirī communities appear to have received more admonitions concerning their communal behavior, such as gossiping and inappropriate meddling in others’ business. Similarly, it is only in urban contexts that we find al-Khalīfa warning his adepts about the influence of undesirable religious elements. This rhetoric appears to address problems arising from the diversity of urban culture. Morocco’s cities were home to many different Sufi brotherhoods who often competed against one another for status and members. Similarly, in cities like Sale and Fez, where religious and political life were often intertwined, a zāwiya could easily transform from a space for worship to a social club for discussing and plotting intrigues. In addition to the spiritual and moral consequences of such behavior, these types of activities often led to intra-branch discord and division. In this way, al-Khalīfa sought to preserve the integrity of his students and their community by persistently calling for them to fill their lodges with the remembrance of God and to avoid matters that were not their direct concern.

118 al-Khalīfa’s correspondence includes discussions about the transport of construction materials to the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya in Tamgrūt. See “Nāṣirī Letters”, 117-8.
119 See Ibn Nāṣir’s admonishment to the Chefchaouen community discussed above.
120 al-Khalīfa subtly criticizes the Fez community’s affinity for esotericism in the following letter: “Nāṣirī Letters”, 217-18.
121 An example of this can be found in the career of Maḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khayyāt (d. 1140/1727) who entered the Nāṣiriyā order at the hands of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and traveled to study with him in Tamgrūt. Ibn Nāṣir gave al-Khayyāt permission to lead the Nāṣirī community in Fez upon his return. He did so successfully, but chose to also establish his own zāwiya that competed with the local Nāṣiriyā branch for members. See ‘Abd Allāh Najmī, “Al-Khayyāt, Maḥammad b. Ibrāhīm,” in Maʿlamat Al-Maghrib, 24 vols. (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābi’ Salā, 2000), v. 12, 3887-8; ‘Amālik, Jawānib, v. 3, 673-4.
122 In one letter to the Nāṣirī community in Fez, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa threatens to excommunicate the group due to their penchant for gossiping and backbiting another one in the presence of the Nāṣiriyā’s shaykh. See “Nāṣirī Letters”, 223-4.
i.  The Ṭaḥširīyya Zāwīya in Marrakech

The Ṭaḥširī community in Marrakech provides a good example of how the order took shape within an urban context. The Ṭaḥširīyya was first introduced into the city by al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī who came to the Marrakech in 1096/1685 after living for nearly two decades in Fez. In al-Muhādarāt, al-Yūsī depicts his missionizing as part of his duty to guide and educate his fellow Muslims. His biographers note that he used his home as a gathering place for his students and adepts. Abū'Amālik considers this to have been the first Ṭaḥširīyya zāwīya in the city. After al-Yūsī’s death, Abū al-Hājj Abū Sittah (d.c. early 12th/18th century) as their mugaddam. However, his tenure was marred by the presence of Abū b. 'Abd Allāh al-Sharrādī (d. 1144/1732), an ecstatic Sufi and student of al-Yūsī’s, who sought to occupy the new Ṭaḥširī zāwīya. Abū Sittah struggled to maintain his community’s support and appealed to al-Khalīfa to intervene on his behalf on several occasions. In one letter, al-Khalīfa separately reprimanded students (ṭalaba) and adepts (fiqarā') for their disrespectful treatment of their mugaddam. However, Abū Sittah was never able to recover his authority. In response to the

123 'Amālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 682.
124 al-Yūsī, al-Muhādarāt, v. 2, 434. This view likely reflects Ibn Ṭaḥširī’s universalist vision of reviving the sunna and displays the lack of partisan feeling in the early Ṭaḥširī community.
125 'Amālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 683.
128 “Ṭaḥširī Letters”, 104ff.
Marrakech community’s request, al-Khalīfa replaced Abū Sittah with Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥimyarī in 1118/1706.¹²⁹

However, al-Sharrādī continued to disrupt the Nāṣirī community. In a letter dated 14 Muḥarram 1120/4 April 1708, al-Khalīfa criticizes his adepts’ attraction to this man by admonishing them to follow the sunna. He called them to use the Prophetic example as a criterion to interrogate the miracles that charlatan Sufis often claimed to bolster their spiritual authority. He writes, “If you see someone flying between the heavens and the earth, subject their deeds [to the criterion] of the sunna. If that person conforms, then think well of them, and if not, then turn away from them.”¹³⁰ He concludes by asserting, “the path (ṭarīqa) of our teachers, may God be praised, is pure, clean, wholesome, and founded upon the Book and sunna.”¹³¹ However, al-Khalīfa’s intervention did not succeed. al-Sharrādī was able to divide the Nāṣirī community, leading them to abandon their zāwiya.¹³² At this point, al-Khalīfa appointed a new muqaddam, Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-ʿAwnī, the third in five years. This marked a period of stability for the order, especially after al-Sharrādī’s departure to establish his own zāwiya on Marrakech’s outskirts.¹³³

Ahmad al-Khalīfa’s handling of the muqaddam crisis in Marrakech reflects the differences between his and his father’s leadership styles. Maḥammad b. Nāṣir was lenient with regard to the Nāṣīrīyya’s transmission. He gave many of his students the permission to induct new adepts, which allowed for the brotherhood’s wide diffusion

¹²⁹ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 53.
¹³⁰ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 95.
¹³¹ “Nāṣirī Letters”, 95.
¹³² ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 688.
¹³³ ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 689.
across Morocco. al-Khalīfa continued this policy at least initially, but grew more stern later into his tenure.\textsuperscript{134} We see this above, as well as in several other instances around the same period. For example, al-Khalīfa’s relationship with his father’s student and Nāṣirī evangelizer Ahmad b. ’Abd al-Qādir al-Tastāwuṭī cooled around the beginning of the 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century when the latter began making claims about his high spiritual station.\textsuperscript{135} Later, while returning from hajj in 1122/1711, al-Khalīfa intervened to censure Ibn Abī Zayyān al-Qandūsī (1733/1145), the shaykh of the Nāṣirī zāwiya in Qanādsā, Algeria. On the Eastward portion of his journey, al-Khalīfa had appointed al-Qandūsī as the Nāṣiriyya’s representative (nā’ib) in the region. However, after finding al-Qandūsī to be too permissive in inducting new members, he dismissed him and excommunicated him from the order.\textsuperscript{136}

While al-Khalīfa’s rhetoric could be harsh, his ability to influence local branch affairs was uneven. We see this in the Marrakech example. At the beginning of the crisis, al-Khalīfa unsuccessfully attempted to bolster al-Ḥājj Abū Sittah. When the Marrakech community abandoned al-Khalīfa’s chosen representative, he had no choice but to appoint a new muqaddam, lest al-Sharrādī take his place or the existing community should dissolve itself. al-Khalīfa did succeed in censuring al-Qandūsī but it seems that was because he did so in person, directly, while staying in Qanādsā on his return from the hajj. Regardless, it seems that, after al-Khalīfa’s rebuke, al-Qandūsī resumed his previous

\textsuperscript{134} ʿAbd Allāh Najmī describes some of the contours of this debate in his biographical entry on Ahmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī, the prominent Nāsirī scholar from Marrakech, in \textit{Maʿlamat al-Maghrib}. See “al-Rasmūkī, Aḥmad b. Sulaymān,” \textit{Maʿlamat al-Maghrib}, v. 12, 4341-2.

\textsuperscript{135} al-Saʿdiyyīn, “al-Tastāwuṭī,” 2364.

\textsuperscript{136} See discussion in Chapter 4.
activities. The Qanādsa zāwiya would remain an influential Sufi center in the Northwest Sahara and continued to transmit the Nāṣirīyya order throughout the 12th/18th century.\textsuperscript{137}

Though al-Khalīfa appears ineffectual in these episodes, these outcomes reflect his and his father’s decentralized approach to managing Nāṣirī branches. Like Ibn Nāṣir, al-Khalīfa remained committed to the Nāṣirīyya’s growth and diffusion through local leaders. We see this in his instructions to al-Ḥimyarī and other local delegates to make decisions about branch affairs by consulting among themselves without involving their shaykh. Appeals to Tamgrūt were only encouraged when local consultation failed to satisfy a branch’s needs. The Marrakech and Qanādsa episodes represent the limit of al-Khalīfa’s willingness to exert direct control over adepts. Only after his death did later Nāṣirī shaykhs begin visiting local branches to collect dues and lend direct support to local delegates.\textsuperscript{138} This marked the beginning of the Nāṣirīyya’s transition from a univeralist spiritual community to a particularist Sufi brotherhood centered around the Tamgrūt zāwiya.

In addition to displaying the relationship between local delegates and their shaykh, al-Khalīfa’s letters also provide details about the social roles of Nāṣirī branches and their communities’ religious practices. As was the case in Tamgrūt, the Marrakech lodges were intended to be a public space for worship, spiritual training and education. We see this in his response to learning this zāwiya had been closed during the al-Sharrādī

\textsuperscript{137} See forthcoming discussion in Chapter 4.
crisis. In a sharply worded letter, he commands the Marrakech community to reopen the 
\( zāwiya \) and make sure it is occupied night and day by people remembering God or 
seeking knowledge.\(^\text{139}\) He instructs them to use their \( zāwiya \)’s endowment revenues to 
pay for a full-time imam and a teacher as well as to provided food for guests and the 
neighboring community.\(^\text{140}\) Education was a point of emphasis for all Nāṣirī branch 
\( zāwiyas \). We see this in other letters in which al-Khalīfa encourages the Marrakech 
community to attend classes\(^\text{141}\) and seek knowledge, specifically in the \( ḥadīth \) sciences.\(^\text{142}\)

ii. The Nāṣiriyya in the Sūs

The Sūs region refers to Morocco’s southernmost territories, beginning on the 
southern slopes of the High Atlas Mountains. This area’s precise definition has changed 
over time. Most historical sources describe the Sūs as beginning on Morocco’s Southern 
Atlantic coast, near the modern port of Agādīr, and extending eastward to Dar`a. 
Likewise, most Pre-Modern Moroccan geographers describe the region’s southern 
boundaries as extending across the Sahara to Timbuktu. The Sūs’ geography varies 
greatly between its different sub-regions. The Sūs river valley, which extends from 
Awlūz to Agādīr, is one of Morocco’s most fertile agricultural regions. In the pre-Modern 
period, it was well-known for its abundant date production, as well as that of olives and 
other staple crops. This area is also home to the Sūs’ densest settlement. The city of 
Ṭārūdant, founded on the foothills of the High Atlas mountain’s, due south of Marrakech,

139 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 86 Seeking knowledge is also emphasized in several letters to the Nāṣirī 
community in Rabāt - Sale. See Ibid., 178-9, 193.
140 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 87.
142 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 92, undated.
is located in this valley and served as the region’s capital during much of the pre-Modern period. The Sūs river basin is bounded to the South and West by the Anti-Atlas Mountains. Not as imposing as Morocco’s northern mountain chains, the Anti-Atlas, known locally as Jazūla, is home to many small villages that subsist on small-scale agriculture and herding. Past the Anti-Atlas’ southern slopes lies the Sahara Desert’s northwestern frontier. Like Darʿa’s southern oases, the tribes and villages in this region played an important role in Trans-Saharan trade and movement of peoples.¹⁴³

As was the case in Darʿa, and elsewhere in Morocco, Sufi lodges served a prominent role in Sūsī society and culture during the Islamic period.¹⁴⁴ The region’s distance from major cultural centers like Fez and Marrakech supported the development of a distinct, local scholarly tradition based out of rural teaching zāwiyas. Additionally, the Sūs’s blend of sedentary and tribal communities created ideal social conditions for the emergence of saintly figures. At times, local saints became politically active.¹⁴⁵ At other times, the zāwiya as a social institution served as the basis for local political dynasties. Such was the case of zāwiya of Aḥmad b. Mūsa in Ilīgh, which became the site of an independent emirate under, Abū Hassūn al-Samlālī (d. 1070/1659).¹⁴⁶

Given Darʿa’s proximity, and its connection to the Sūs through trade and the movement of peoples, it is not surprising that the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with the Sūs going back to the 1050s/1640s. This is when the Ibn

¹⁴³ حسن حافظ ئالوبي، “Sūs,” in Ma’lamat al-Maghrib, v. 15, 5171-3.
¹⁴⁴ The Sūs is home to the zāwiya founded by Sīdī Waggāg b. Zallū (d. 445/1054), the scholar credited with inspiring the Almoravid movement.
¹⁴⁵ Such was the case with the career of Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Jazūlī and the Jazūliyya’s support of the Sa’dī movement. See discussion above in Chapter 1.
¹⁴⁶ ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 1, 54.
Nāṣir welcomed his first students from this region. The first documented Nāṣirī branch established in the Sūs was Zāwiya al-Būr, the lodge established by Ibn Nāṣir’s son, ʿAlī in Aвлūz, after he left Tamgrūt in 1674/1085. This zāwiya increased the Nāṣirī family’s presence in the region and served as an important hub for Sūsī Nāṣirīs traveling to Tamgrūt. However, there is no evidence that its establishment improved relations between Tamgrūt and Sūs communities. Rather, scholarly travel remained the main means for the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood’s transmission in the region during Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure. In response to the high volume of Sūsī visitors to Tamgrūt, al-Khalīfa’s designated the Nāṣirī branch zāwiya in nearby Zagora as a hostel for Sūsī students and guests. Indeed, historian al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī writes that by the 12th/18th century “all” Sūsī scholars had become members of the Nāṣiriyya.148

**Figure 2.2: Important Early Nāṣirī Scholars from the Sūs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ibrāhīm al-Sabāʾī (d. 1138/1726)149</td>
<td>Came to Tamgrūt in 1642/1052 to study with Ibn Nāṣir. Polymath scholar with a specialty in Qur’anic recitation. Performed two ḥajj journeys to the Middle East. Ibn Nāṣir appointed him as Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tutor. al-Sibāʾī’s chains of transmission are recorded in Fath al-Malik al-Nāṣir.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aḥmad al-Hashtükī (d. 1127/1714)</td>
<td>Studied in Tamgrūt under Ibn Nāṣir, who directed him to study with al-Yūsī at the Dilāʾīyya zāwiya. Served as chief judge in Taghāza in the 1680s and taught many</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

147 Ṭāmilik, Jawāniḥ, v. 3, 587.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī (d. 1142/1729)</td>
<td>Studied in Tamgrūt under Aḥmad al-Khalīfā and became his secretary and confidant. Composed many of al-Khalīfā’s letters as recorded in the “Nāṣirī Letters.” Married into the Nāṣirī family and attempted to succeed al-Khalīfā as the Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh, but was expelled by Dar’a’s governor and returned to the Sūs. There he continued to evangelize the Nāṣiriyya path and established a number of teaching zāwiyas in the area of Tāznakht.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Bakr al-Tārakūntī (d.c. 12/18 century)</td>
<td>Student of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfā. Was knowledgeable but is better known for his life of service at the Nāṣiriyya zāwīya. Composed a praise poem for the Nāṣiriyya entitled Masarrat al-Ikhwān that relates the brotherhood’s spiritual lineage, describes its leaders’ miracles, outlines their spiritual principles and records the names of its branches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrāhīm al-Takushtī (d. 1136/1724)</td>
<td>Student of al-Khalīfā and jurist. Died while in Egypt on his return from hajj. His corpse was embalmed and was buried in the Sūs upon its return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Hawzūlī (d. 1162/1749)</td>
<td>Polymath scholar and student of al-Khalīfā, who supported his scholarly works in Tashilhīṭ and Arabic. He wrote a fiqh work in Tashilhīṭ that is considered comparable to Muktaṣar Khalīlī as well as several famous religious and polemical poems. al-Hawzūlī is considered to be the father of Sūsī Tashilhīṭ literature.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

153 al-Ḥuḍaykī, Tabaqāt, v. 1, 142-3.
Many of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s Sūsī students returned to their homes to establish teaching zāwiya. This stimulated a scholarly florescence in the region during the late 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. Chief among these was the aforementioned Aḥmad al-Ṣawābī who established a teaching zāwiya in Adūz, on the Sūs’s Atlantic coast, that graduated many Nāṣirī affiliated scholars during this period. One of his students was Muḥammad al-Ḥuḍaykī, an accomplished muḥaddith who transmitted the Nāṣirīyya’s scholarly and religious tradition to a generation of Sūsī scholars in the 12th/18th century.156 Another of the Nāṣirīyya’s missionaries in the region was al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī, al-Khalīfa’s best student, scribe and confidant until the shaykh’s death in 1129/1717. Many of al-Shuraḥbīlī’s Nāṣirī contemporaries considered him to have inherited al-Khalīfa’s spiritual mantle (ṣīr). al-Shuraḥbīlī attempted to succeed al-Khalīfa, as the Nāṣirīyya’s shaykh, but was thwarted by al-Khalīfa’s nephew, Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr al-Nāṣirī, who enjoyed the support of Dar’a’s ‘Alawī governor. al-Shuraḥbīlī was expelled from Tamgrūt, initiating an exodus of many of its accomplished scholars.157 Back in the Sūs, al-Shuraḥbīlī established a number of his own zāwiya in the

| Aḥmad al-Ṣawābī (d. 1149/1736)155 | Student of al-Khalīfa and considered to be the “seal” of Sūs hadith scholars. Responsible for the transmission of the Nāṣirī scholarly method to the region which he disseminated through his zāwiya in the Anti-Atlas Mountains. |

156 al-Ḥuḍaykī was a prolific teacher. His students are chronicled in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jishtīmi’s al-Hudaykīyyūn, ed. al-Majlis al-ʿIlmī al-Maḥālī lī-Tārīdant (Casablanca: Maṭbaʻat al-Najāḥ al-Jaḍīdah, 2010).
157 Fatima Harrak highlights the important role played by the Sharqawiyya zāwiya in housing Nāṣirīyya scholars who abandoned Tamgrūt during this period. See “State and Religion in Eighteenth Century Morocco”, 83-4.
area of Tāznakht. He continued to transmit the Nāṣīrī order through these centers as well as through his own periodic tours of Nāṣīrī branches in the Sūs.\textsuperscript{158}

**Figure 2.3:** Prominent Nāṣīrī communities and zāwiyas in the Sūs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Zāwiyyat al-Būr, Awlūz\textsuperscript{159} | 1085/1674 | • Founded by ʿAlī b. Maḥammad b. Nāṣīr after he left Tamgrūt in protest against Ahmad al-Khalīfa’s succession as the Nāṣirīyya’s shaykh  
  • Zāwiyyat al-Būr grew to be very wealthy, and owned land, gardens and copper and iron mines  
  • ʿAmālīk argues that Awlūz served as a center for the collection of gifts from Nāṣīrī communities in the Sūs for their transport to Tamgrūt |
| Adūz\textsuperscript{160} | c. 1080s/1670s | • Atlantic coastal region of the Sūs, home to many prominent Nāṣīrī scholars  
  • The madrasa of Adūz was led by Nāṣīrī scholars throughout the 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} and early 13\textsuperscript{th}/19\textsuperscript{th} centuries |
| Zāwiyyat al-Mā’ al-Abyād, Tāznakht\textsuperscript{161} | c. 1129/1717 | • Founded by al-Ḥusayn al-Shurahbīlī after his expulsion from Tamgrūt  
  • Important as an education center as well as for the arbitration of water rights in the region |
| Zāwiyyat al-Śawābī, ʿAgdāl Māsā\textsuperscript{162} | c. 1100s/1700s | • Founded by Ahmad al-Śawābī, the foremost Sūsī hadith scholar of his era |

\textsuperscript{159} ʿAmālīk, *Jawānīb*, v. 3, 587.  
\textsuperscript{160} ʿAmālīk, *Jawānīb*, v. 3, 592ff.  
\textsuperscript{161} ʿAmālīk, *Jawānīb*, v. 3, 595-6.  
\textsuperscript{162} ʿAmālīk, *Jawānīb*, v. 3, 605.
al-Sawābī’s graduates included Muḥammad al-Ḥudaykī, a muḥaddith who inherited his teacher’s mantle and spread the Nāṣirīyya’s rigorous scholarly method throughout the region in the 12th/18th century.

| Zāwiyat Ifrān, Ifrān | c. late 11th/17th century | • Founded by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Sijilmāsī (d. 1723/1135)
• Its location on the southern slopes of the Anti-Atlas Mountains was an important link between the Nāṣirīyya and Trans-Saharan trade routes |
| Zāwiyat Tiṃḡidesht | c. 1220s/1810s | • Founded by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Tiṃḡideshtī (d. 1274/1858)
• Considered the “axis” around which the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood turned in the Sūs during the 13th/19th century |
| Zāwiyat Tānghamelt | c. 1679/1090 | • Zāwiyat founded by Jazūlī Sufī in 10th/16th century
• In 1679/1090 the zāwiyat’s shaykh Muḥammad b. Ibrahim b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz entered the Nāṣirī order at the hands of Aḥmad al-Khālīfā
• Occupied an important location at intersection of High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains |

The “Nāṣirī Letters” only contain a few pieces of correspondence between Aḥmad al-Khālīfā and his adepts in the Sūs. It’s unclear why this is the case, especially because we know that Aḥmad al-Khālīfā instructed his Sūsī adepts to preserve and compile his letters. However, it is possible this collection’s compiler did not travel to the Sūs or that

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165 al-Sūsī, al-Maʾsul, v. 6, 183.
166 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 3, 631ff.
he was otherwise unable to obtain correspondence from this region. If such a collection exists, it remains in a private library or undiscovered. It is also possible that correspondence was not the primary means of communication between Tamgrūt and its Sūsī affiliates. It may be that the regular circulation of visitors from the Sūs to the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya would have allowed al-Khalīfa to guide these communities through direct interactions with their representatives.¹⁶⁷ We find evidence for this in the biography of Muḥammad al-Hawzālī (d.c. 1160s/1740s-50s), who studied with al-Khalīfa in Tamgrūt during the late 11th/17th century. After returning to his home village of Igherm, near to Tārūdant, al-Hawzālī composed a polemical poem criticizing his local community’s disregard for the Prophetic sunna in their social and religious practices. Before publishing this work, he traveled to Tamgrūt and submitted it to al-Khalīfa for review. The Nāṣirī shaykh praised al-Hawzālī’s poem and recommended he write an accompanying commentary for his work and translate it into Tashellḥū.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Muḥammad al-Ḥuḍaykī fondly recalls how al-Khalīfa initiated him into his religious studies during one of the shaykh’s visits to the zāwīya of Aḥmad b. Mūsā in Ilīgh.¹⁶⁹ This personal involvement was unique to the Sūs. We have no evidence that he traveled to visit branches elsewhere in the country. Rather, he preferred to guide them through correspondence and by granting local delegates significant autonomy.

¹⁶⁷ al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī’s important position as al-Khalīfa’s secretary may reflect the Sūsī communities’ influence in Tamgrūt.
¹⁶⁹ al-Ḥuḍaykī, Tabaqāt, v. 1, 85.
However, two of al-Khalīfa’s letters show that his personal engagement with Sūsī communities did not alter the leadership practices he applied to urban communities. The first is a short missive to Nāṣirī leaders in Ifrān, Jazūla and Hawzāla. In this note, al-Khalīfa reaffirms their loving bond and exhorts these scholars to dedicate themselves to teaching Șaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in their zāwiyas. He also instructs them to preserve and compile his letters because of their value as spiritual reminders. The second letter is not addressed to any particular community or individual but is, rather, a general injunction relating the rights and responsibilities of the Nāṣirī mugaddam and the proper etiquette between local delegates and their communities. Its contents generally conform with the letters of appointment for the Marrakech delegates al-Ḥājj Abū Sittah and al-Ḥimyarī discussed above. However, its language is more general and shows less particular interest in local branch politics. Despite a dearth of correspondence to Sūsī communities, we can see that Sūsī Nāṣirī affiliates faced challenges similar to those of their colleagues in Marrakech and other urban centers. Maintaining community solidarity and respect for the mugaddam’s authority as the shaykh’s representative seems to have been a persistent problem. However, al-Khalīfa’s correspondence with Sūsī communities is more general in nature compared with his letters to urban Nāṣirī affiliates. It seems that the circulation of Nāṣirī students and adepts between the Sūs and Tamgrūt allowed their shaykh to convey instructions to his Sūsī representatives in person rather than through dispatches or messengers.

170 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 84.
171 As al-Khalīfa writes, “these are letters of remembrance (innahā rasāʿ il al-tadhkira).” “Nāṣirī Letters”, 84.
172 “Nāṣirī Letters”, 229-32.
iii. **The Nāṣiriyya in Tribal Settings: The Raḥāmna Tribe**

In addition to urban and sedentary rural communities, the Nāṣiriyya also spread among tribal groups in Dar’a, Morocco’s Atlantic Coastal Plains and the Sūs. Early Nāṣirī sources indicate that joining the Nāṣirī brotherhood allowed tribal communities to transcend social differences and to work together towards common goals and to share common spaces. In his commentary on Mahammad b. Nāṣir’s devotional poem *Sayf al-Naṣr*, al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī defines a Sufi lodge as a space for otherwise disparate pastoralist groups to come together for a common purpose:

> [A zāwiya] refers to a gathering place for needy Muslims, along with the food they require, and is named in such a way due to the various tribes who gather there who set out from every deep canyon, and [travel] by various routes. A zāwiya is a gathering place for diverse tribal groups, who all attend to such places in the hope of attaining blessings.\(^{174}\)

al-Shuraḥbīlī’s text indicates that Sufi lodges in general, and Nāṣirī zāwiyas in particular, helped to unify tribal communities through two different means. First, the lodge brought disparate tribal groups together by giving them a physical space in which to conduct business and obtain necessary services. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the zāwiya’s religious role served to elevate and unify the intentions of its attendees. The goal of seeking blessings from God or a saint would have drawn visitors’ attention away from their social differences.

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\(^{173}\) al-Shuraḥbīlī employs the phrase *fajjʿ amīq*, in reference to Qur’an 22:27.

The “Nāṣirī Letters” document Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s correspondence with a number of tribal groups. One of the most important of these was the Raḥāmna tribe based in the flatlands and plains to the Northwest of Marrakech. A branch of the Arab Banū Maʿqil tribe, the Raḥāmna moved from the Sahara to Marrakech’s outskirts during the Saʿdī period. They subsisted through herding and military activity to become one of the most powerful tribes in their area during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. The letters available to us show that, as was the case in sedentary communities, al-Khalīfa appointed a muqaddam to guide, remind and educate the Raḥāmna. The Nāṣirī path communicated through these letters emphasizes the importance of worship and piety for the tribe’s benefit and well-being. In one letter, al-Khalīfa admonished the Awlād al-Nawm, a sub-group of the Raḥāmna, for rejecting the advice of adepts sent to them from Tamgrūt. He writes:

We love you and love for you to have goodness. We’ve made it easy for you to occupy yourselves with God’s path, as it was brought to us by the Prophet, peace be upon him. [This consists of] consistently performing your ritual prayers at the proper times and respecting God’s boundaries. In this way, your children and property will be purified and your tribe protected and kept safe from all trials and tribulation that bring uncertainty to believers’ hearts. [We know that] some of your brothers came to you from our end and admonished you for performing unlawful deeds that will lead you astray, harm you before your Lord and expose you to His anger. Yet, you [transgressed] God’s command by rejecting [them] with your mouths and hands. I am not pleased for you to act in this way, nor do I

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175 The “Nāṣirī Letters” contain many examples of correspondence between Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and tribal groups. See: Letter #41 to the Ṣawāliḥ, a sub-group of the Raḥāmna tribe in area of Marrakech, 74-6; Letter #42 to the Nāṣirī muqaddam in the Reqrāga tribe on Morocco’s Atlantic coastal plains, 74-6; Letters #50 and #51 to the Ḥimyar tribe, 79-82; Letters #138 to #143 to the Raḥāmna tribe, 128 and 131; Letter #153 to the Zamrān tribe, 135; Letters #151 and #154 to members of the Tekna Tribal Confederation in the Sahara, 134-5; Letters #181 and #182 to the Awlād Faraj tribe: 148-9.


177 “Nāṣirī Letters” #141 and #138 reflect the appointment of two separate muqaddams to the Raḥāmna: 128 and 130.
enjoy it, for such will bring upon you a volley of debilitating trials that you cannot endure.\textsuperscript{178}

al-Khalīfa’s words clearly show how the Nāṣirīyya the brotherhood’s spiritual teachings encouraged socially positive behavior through pious and ethical action. Their path’s success in restoring order and unity in communities that suffered from long-term disruption during the Maraboutic Crisis gave the Nāṣirīyya a great appeal. While we find expressions like these in al-Khalīfa’s letters to sedentary urban and sedentary rural communities, the statements above make it clear that maintaining unity was a chief concern among the Nāṣirīyya’s tribal affiliates. As al-Khalīfa states, Nāṣirī affiliated tribes derived benefit from observing the brotherhood’s religious teachings. Doing so prevented them from wronging one another and displeasing God which, in turn, protected their families and livelihood.

al-Khalīfa continues his letter by calling the tribe to listen to exhortations for them to turn towards God. He writes that even if a non-Muslim conveys a sincere counsel (\textit{naṣīḥa}), it should be followed. He accompanies this with additional instructions to the Nāṣirī adepts dispatched to the Awlād al-Nawm. al-Khalīfa reminds the adepts that it is their responsibility to call their neighbors to goodness with kind and gentle words. He obliges them to understand how to effectively communicate God’s word and that, if they fail to do so, they must not abandon their community. Rather, they should redouble their efforts and adopt a gentler and more sympathetic approach:

The solution is not to isolate yourselves from your brothers and set yourselves apart from them, rather the solution is to embrace them with your hearts by reminding them of God’s blessings upon them and conveying His commands to

\textsuperscript{178} “Nāṣirī Letters”, #139, 129.
them gently and with the best manners. Be humble before your brothers and rely on God, He will aid you.\textsuperscript{179}

In these closing lines, al-Khalīfa emphasizes the inextricable bond between Nāṣirī students and their lay colleagues. As we saw in the aforementioned example of al-Hawzālī, students who completed their studies in Tamgrūṭ sometimes struggled to accept the spiritual condition of their neighbors back home. al-Khalīfa reminds them that they have a responsibility to call their communities to goodness without alienating them or abandoning them.

\textsuperscript{179} “Nāṣirī Letters”, #139, 129.
## Appendix

Figure 2.4: Urban Nāṣirī Communities in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th Centuries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Foundation</th>
<th>Notable Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Fās180     | c. 1078/1668 | • al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (founder)  
• Maḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Khayyāṭ (d.c. 12th/18th century)  
• Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Bannānī (muqaddam) (d. 1163/1749)  
• al-Tawūdī b. Sūda (muqaddam) (d. 1209/1795)  
• Sulaymān al-Ḥawwāt (d. 1231/1816)  
• Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Ḍu‘ayyīf (d.c. 1238/1822)  
• Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī (d. 1239/1823) |
| Tetouan181 | c. 1070s/1660s | • ʿAlī Barakah al-Tiywānī (founder, muqaddam)  
• al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (co-founder)  
• Ibn Zakūr al-Fāsī (co-founder)  
• Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Bannānī  
• Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Warzāzī (d. 1179/1766)  
• Aḥmad b. ʿAjība (d. 1224/1809) |
| Marrakech182 | c. 1090s/1680s | • al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī (founder)  
• Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī (d. 1133/1721)  
• al-Ṣaghīr al-Ifrānī (d. 1160/1747) |
| Rabat/Salé183 | c. 1100s/1690s | • ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tastāwūfī (founder)  
• Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Gharbī (d.c. 12th/18th century) |

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|   |   | • Muḥammad al-Daqqāq (d. 1158/1746) |
Chapter Three
The Nāṣirī Scholarly Tradition

And they will say, “Had we but heard or understood, we would not have been from among the people of the blazing fire.”

-Qur’an, 67:10

Introduction

In addition to his spiritual teachings, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s most significant legacy was the *sunna*-centric scholarly tradition he nurtured at the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya. Ibn Nāṣir was one of several Sufi scholars who championed the study of *ḥadīth* in Morocco during the 11th/17th century. However, his use of the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya as an educational space allowed Ibn Nāṣir to disseminate his rigorous *sunna*-centric scholarly approach through generations of his students. This chapter studies the Nāṣirī scholarly tradition from its origins under Ibn Nāṣir through to the end of the 12th/18th century. It argues that Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣirīyya are largely responsible for the revival of the *ḥadīth* sciences in Morocco after their decline during the Sa’dī period and Maraboutic Crisis. Furthermore, it establishes Ibn Nāṣir and his students as practitioners of verification (*taḥqīq*) in the transmitted and rational sciences. This critical, scholarly rigor distinguished Nāṣirī scholars and placed them at the forefront of the greater *sunnī* revival movement that spread across the Muslim world during the later 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.
The Study of Ḥadīth in Morocco during the 10th/16th and 11th/17th Centuries

Evidence suggests that the study of hadīth declined in Morocco under the Saʿdī Dynasty in the late 10th/16th and early 11th/17th centuries. Historian Muḥammad Ḥajjī writes that the transmitted sciences (al-ʿulūm al-naqliyya), which include the study of hadīth, dominated Muslim scholarship during the early Saʿdī period. However, by the later 10th/16th century, scholars in urban centers had shifted their attention towards developing the rational sciences (al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya). These distinct scholarly discourses represent differing epistemological assumptions and transmission practices. Ḥajjī writes that most teachers in Saʿdī era Morocco taught the transmitted sciences in a majlis or study circle held in their homes, a religious school (madrasa) or a mosque. Many of these scholars engaged in analyzing texts (mutūn) through their existing commentaries. He states that only a few exceptional teachers avoided using derivative works and taught primary texts (uṣūl or ummahāt al-kutub) with their own, extemporaneous commentary.

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1 Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 81.
2 What designates these fields as ‘transmitted’ is not necessarily their content but rather how their authority is derived and the means of their transmission. In field like Qur’anic recitation and Prophetic traditions, authority is based on the strength of a teachers’ chain of transmission, referred to either as riwāya or isnād. In contrast, Islam’s rational sciences derive their authority from the soundness of their claims as determined through experimentation, debate or deductive reasoning. For more on the concept of the isnād in Islamic thought, see: William Graham, “Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interpretation,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 23, no. 3 (1993): 495-522 For a description of which academic disciplines fell into the transmitted and rational sciences in Saʿdī-era Morocco, see Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 86, 91-2.
3 Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 94.
4 For example, see the careers of Ibrāhīm al-Dukkāli and his descendants in Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 95.
As for the rational sciences, Ḥajjī writes that some disciplines, like logic (*montoniq*), were taught through manuals in study circles. However, the authority granted to deductive reasoning within these fields enabled students to pursue these disciplines through independent reading (*muṭāla’a*). During the Sa’dī period, scholarly disputations and discussions (*munāẓara*) served as sites for the rational sciences’ development and transmission. The culture of these exchanges differed dramatically from that of the transmitted sciences’ study circles. Hajjī writes that the *munāẓara* was a highly competitive space that encouraged the criticism of peers and past authorities alike. The purpose of these debates, which were usually small, was to explore nuances of different disciplines through discussion and deductive reasoning. Ḥajjī argues that the rational sciences’ influence during this period can be seen in the increased application of novel legal reasoning (*ijtihād*) by Fez’s jurists. Furthermore, a coincidental decline in the transmission of *ḥadīth* texts underscores the rational sciences’ popularity.

Ḥajjī writes that Sa’dī-era scholars in Fez showed a preference for transmitting the Qur’an and its attendant sciences rather than Prophetic traditions. Scholarly certificates (sing. *ijāza*) from this period demonstrate the sustained transmission of the Qur’an in its

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7 Ḥajjī, *al-Ḥaraka Fikriyya*, v. 1, 98.
10 Ḥajjī, *al-Ḥaraka Fikriyya*, v. 1, 61, 100-1.
entirety. However, the transmission of hadīth seems to have declined in rigor and thoroughness. Certificates in this discipline show that teachers authorized their students in the canonical hadīth collections after having heard only a few excerpts rather than the entire text. Ḥajjī postulates that it may have been too time consuming for teachers to study entire hadīth collections with their students. Another possible factor in this decline could have been scholars’ interest in spreading their chains of transmission rather than ensuring the rigorous transmission of hadīth themselves. Additionally, Ḥajjī notes that few of the certificates that he studied in hadīth came from Moroccan scholars. Rather, they were granted by teachers in the Middle East with whom Moroccans met and studied while performing hajj.

The Maraboutic Crisis appears to have exacerbated the growing disparity between the rational and transmitted sciences among Moroccan religious scholars. Prior to Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s death, political stability and economic prosperity provided religious scholars with safe spaces to gather and teach. Salaries from endowment properties (awqāf), royal patronage and commerce provided scholars with financial stability. Such a political economy supported Islamic scholarship, in general, but especially the transmitted sciences. As noted above, the study of the hadīth literature was usually time consuming. Expertise in hadīth also required travel and interactions with a large community of

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11 Ḥajjī gives examples of two ijāzas in Qur’an from 981/1575 and 1035/1626 respectively. See al-Ḥaraka Fikriyya, v. 1, 102.
12 Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 103. Knowledge exchange via the overland hajj pilgrimage will be discussed in Chapter 4.
13 Sa’di Sultans constructed numerous mosques and religious colleges (sing. madrasa) that provided spaces for scholarly activity. See Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 81-2.
14 For a discussion of revenue sources for Sa’di-era scholars, see Ḥajjī, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, v. 1, 119-123.
scholars. The political and socioeconomic instability of the Maraboutic Crisis disrupted these knowledge producing practices.

The succession crisis between Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s sons placed Morocco’s religious scholars in a difficult position. Within pre-modern Muslim societies, religious scholars served a mediating role between political rulers and the general populace. In Morocco, they also played a leading role in the process of confirming allegiance (bay’a) to a new Sultan or ruler. This political role only intensified during times of crisis when rulers sought scholars’ approval for controversial policies or to support their political ambitions. One such crisis was the Sa’dī claimant al-Shaykh al-Ma’mūn’s request for Fez’s religious scholars to authorize the surrender of the port city of al-’Arā’ish to the Spanish. To avoid responding to the Sultan, some scholars went into hiding. Those who voiced an opinion did so at great personal risk. Muḥammad b. Qāsim Ibn al-Qāḍī (d. 1017/1608) argued that al-Ma’mūn’s decision was permissible because the Sultan’s intention was to ransom the descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. However, Ibn al-Qāḍī’s opinion angered Fez’s residents. Shortly after Ibn al-Qāḍī issued his fatwa, he was killed by a mob in broad daylight. Criticism of al-Ma’mūn was equally perilous. The scholar al-Ḥājj al-Aghṣāwī al-Baqqāl (d. 1017/1608) was assassinated for his outspoken criticism of the Sultan. Some scholars also turned to desperate rulers to exact revenge.

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16 al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiṣṣā’; v. 6, 22.
17 al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiṣṣā’; v. 6, 21-22.
18 al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiṣṣā’; v. 6, 22.
from their competitors. In this environment, many scholars chose to flee the city out of fear for their safety.

Ahmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī describes the effect of decades of violence and instability on 11th/17th century Fez as follows:

In those days, Fez was divided among factions. Merchants did not feel secure, except if they requested protection from [one of the rebel leaders]. The unrest that occurred ‘darkened’ the city… Most of the city was abandoned and it was governed by despots. Enmity continued between the residents of the ‘two banks’ until the city nearly vanished and its traces disappeared.

We can understand al-Nāṣirī’s reference to the city’s darkening as a description of religious and scholarly decline. Rather than being ‘enlightened’, Fez ‘darkened’ as the city’s residents departed for safer and more prosperous surroundings and the economic activity that supported the city’s pious endowments slackened. These conditions persisted through the Maraboutic Crisis. In 1073/1663, Muḥammad b. al-Sharīf al-ʿAlawī (d. 1075/1665) launched a scorched earth campaign against the Ḥayayna Arabs living on Fez’s outskirts. The subsequent destruction of farmland led to dire famine in the city, causing its residents to flee once again. As the city lay empty, al-Nāṣirī writes that its mosques – centers of both religious practice and scholarly life – became “dormant.”

How did these conditions affect the study of ḥadīth? Though a comprehensive history of scholarly life during the Maraboutic Crisis does not exist, there is evidence that

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19 One such scholar was ʿAlī b. ʿImrān al-Salāsī (d. 1018/1609) who appealed to Mawlay Zaydān al-Saʿdī to intervene on his behalf in disputes with his peers. Mawlay Zaydān eventually imprisoned al-Salāsī due to his overtures to Zaydān’s political opponents. While in prison, al-Salāsī was poisoned and died. See al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣa’, v. 6, 18.

20 See al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣa’, v. 6, 22.

21 See al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiqāṣa’, v. 6, 58.

the decline of the hadith sciences experienced during the late 10th/16th century only intensified during this period. We find evidence for this in the biography of the aforementioned Īsā al-Sugtānī, one of the few renowned Moroccan hadith scholars of the early 11th/17th century. In an anecdote related by Muḥammad b. al-Ḥājj al-Ifrānī, al-Sugtānī complains about his Moroccan contemporaries’ imprecision when transmitting hadith texts orally. This included their tendency to omit the phrase “he or she said” when relating the members of a hadith text’s chain of transmission. He states that these scholars did so in order to condense the transmission of an isnad, but paid no attention to how this practice risked confusing the relationship between a hadith texts’ transmitters. al-Sugtānī condemns their practice as ambiguous reading (taṣḥīf). We find a similar anecdote abouted Ibn Naṣir’s contemporary, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī. A manuscript copy of al-Fāsī’s biography in Nashr al-Mathānī contains the following marginal note:

[‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī] focused on teaching the sciences of hadith, history of the Prophet Muḥammad’s campaigns (maghāzi) and Prophetic biography (sīra). [At that time], the people of Fez were preoccupied with pursuing fiqh and the rational sciences and abandoned the hadith sciences, whereas [‘Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī] dedicated himself to their study and so revived them.

al-Fāsī and Ibn Naṣir, along with Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dilāʾī, were like-minded Sufi scholars whose revival of Islamic scholarship centered on the elevation of the hadith
corpus. For Ibn Nāṣir, critical engagement with the hadīth literature grew out of his spiritual commitment to reviving the Prophet Muḥammad’s sunna.

The Nāṣiriyya’s Critical Engagement with Ḥadīth

Ibn Nāṣir’s critical engagement with hadīth led his students and biographers to refer to him as a verifying (muḥaqiq) scholar. Verification (taḥqīq) describes a critical approach to Islamic scholarship that grew in popularity during the 10th – 12th/16th-18th centuries.27 This method demands the provision of “evidential grounds” (sing. ḍalīl) for scholarly propositions rather than deferral to established precedent, or taqlīd.28 Though El-Rouayheb associates taḥqīq almost exclusively with the practice of the rational sciences,29 Ibn Nāṣir’s role as a verifying scholar shows this concept’s application to a source-critical approach to the hadīth sciences and Islamic jurisprudence.30

A passage in Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s travelogue, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, illustrates the Nāṣirī practice of taḥqīq.31 Upon leaving Tripoli, Libya, on his way back from hajj, al-

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29 El-Rouayheb links taḥqīq with an increased interest in dialectics and independent reading (muṭālaʿa) in the central Islamic lands. He contrasts these practices with the “oral-aural” methodology of the isnād, which he states, “ceased to do justice to the role of careful reading in the acquisition of knowledge” by the 11th/16th century. He also writes that the rise of taḥqīq led to a decline in the transmitted sciences within the Ottoman Empire during this period. See: Islamic Intellectual History, 126-8 and elsewhere.
Khalīfa discusses the scholarly debates around smoking tobacco. He begins by quoting a long passage from Abū Sālim al-ʾAyyāshī’s ṭiḥla narrative Māʾ al-Mawāʿid. al-ʾAyyāshī, a student of Ibn Nāṣir and a teacher at the Nāṣirīyya zāwiyā, notes that debates about the permissibility of smoking had preoccupied many scholars of recent generations. Specifically, he notes how “later, ‘verifying’ scholars from the Maghrib” (muḥaqiqī al-mutaʾakhkhirīn min al-Maghāriba), had addressed this topic. Smoking presented a challenge to these scholars because of the uncertainty of its permissibility or impermissibility. There is no explicit statement addressing smoking in the Qurʾān or sunna. For this reason some scholars, like Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī (d. 1036/1627), permitted its use. Others, such as ʿĪsā al-Sugtānī, disliked smoking but hesitated to label it as prohibited. al-ʾAyyāshī writes:

“[al-Sugtānī] reviewed many of the proofs (adilla) available to him that could prove smoking’s permissibility, but found they lacked verification (wa lam yajid lahu tahqīqan). Similarly his shaykh [Ibrāhīm] al-Laqqānī reviewed the proofs for [smoking’s] prohibition, but he too found that they lacked verification (tahqīqan).”

As al-ʾAyyāshī states a few lines later that, without a clear proof, a jurist runs the risk of inappropriately innovating regarding one of God’s judgments. For verifying scholars in the Maghrib, this was unacceptable. The lack of clarity surrounding smoking’s permissibility or impermissibility led al-Sugtānī not to rule on the matter. However, he

33 al-Darʿī, al-Ṭiḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 666.
34 Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī also wrote a legal opinion endorsing smoking tobacco while traveling through Wādī Darʿa on his return to Timbuktu in the early 11th/17th century.
35 al-Darʿī, al-Ṭiḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 666.
did call for smoking to be avoided on the basis that one should not perform an action without having certainty about its permissibility.\(^{36}\)

After quoting from al-ʿAyyāshī, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa describes his father’s position on smoking. He writes that Ibn Nāṣir followed the method of “scrupulous imams” by denouncing smoking without pronouncing a judgment on its permissibility.\(^{37}\) He adds, “he agreed with the proofs that suggested smoking’s prohibition, and assigned them as much weight as possible, however he never declared it impermissible. Yet, he emphasized that smoking was unseemly and drove people to abandon it.”\(^{38}\) al-Khalīfa concludes by saying, “this is the opinion of our community’s later verifying scholars.”\(^{39}\) This statement clearly identifies Ibn Nāṣir as a practitioner of taḥqīq. Ibn Nāṣir’s students also considered him a verifying scholar. al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī labeled him as “the verifying teacher (al-ustādh al-muḥaqiqī)”\(^{40}\) Ahmad al-Hashtūkī also considered Ibn Nāṣir the first and foremost of the “verifying and rigorous scholars” (al-muḥaqqīqīn al-mudaqqiqīn) that he studied with during his academic career.\(^{41}\)

Ibn Nāṣir’s legal responsa demonstrate how his commitment to taḥqīq shaped his relationship with the Mālikī school of law. Though he operated within a Mālikī framework, Ibn Nāṣir’s loyalty to the sunna superseded his allegiance to Mālikī precedent. The Ibn Nasir applied all ḥadīth regardless of precedent in Mālikī school. In the Ajwība, Ibn Nāṣir does appeal to the Mālikī madhhab’s established authorities to

\(^{36}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 666.

\(^{37}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 668.

\(^{38}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 668.

\(^{39}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 668.

\(^{40}\) Amālik, Jawānīb, v. 1, 267.

formulate his legal opinions. These include Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386/996), Khalīl b. Ishāq (d.c. 766/1365), Aḥmad Zarrūq and the school’s namesake, Mālik b. Anas. Though Ibn Nāṣir displays clear respect for his predecessors, the Ajwība contain many examples of his departure from Mālikī precedent in favor of textual evidence from the hadīth. For example, he disagrees with Zarrūq’s opinion that designating particular chapters of the Qur’an to read during voluntary (nawāfīl) prayers constitutes an unlawful innovation (bid’ā). Ibn Nāṣir approved of doing so based on hadīths in Ṣaḥīh al-Bukhārī that describe the chapters of Qur’an that the Prophet Muḥammad regularly recited during his voluntary prayers. Ibn Nāṣir’s response to a petitioner inquiring about the propriety of reciting Qur’an over a deceased person clearly illustrates this tendency:

Reciting Qur’an at graves is attested to in the hadīth literature and should not be disapproved of, despite Mālik’s dislike of [the practice]. We understand this to mean that the hadīth [supporting this practice] did not reach him. There is nothing wrong with reciting chapter Yā Sīn as the deceased is lowered into the grave. Mālik did not know of [the practice] of tossing dirt onto the grave, however it is good (lākin hiya ḥasana), though it should not be considered to be a sunna.

As we can see, Ibn Nāṣir felt comfortable with revising Mālik b. Anas’s legal position in light of evidence from the hadīth literature. According to his biographers, Ibn Nāṣir once

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42 Ibn Nāṣir responds to questions about the meanings of statements in al-Risāla in his responsa concerning marriage and divorce. See al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 134, responsa #15 and #16.
43 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 81.
45 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 73.
46 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 48. See also his disagreement with Khalīl b. Ishāq’s opinion on fasting the first six days of Shawwāl and the ‘white days’ in al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 86.
47 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 78.
said, “I’ve acted upon every Prophetic hadith that I’ve known, even just once and even if it contradicted Imām Mālik’s madhhab, in order to seek its blessings.”

Ibn Nāṣir’s critical application of the sunna is also apparent in his arguments supporting the role of a sound chain of transmission (riwāya) in acquiring knowledge and establishing social and religious practices. He states the following in a response concerning the validity of tarāwīḥ prayers during the month of Ramadan:

My brother, please benefit from this response and do not be deceived by the free reign of ignorant people across the land. [These are] those who take knowledge from pages without a chain of transmission (riwāya), nor knowledge nor understanding (dirāya). We seek refuge in God from ignorance and its causes.

This passage reveals Ibn Nāṣir’s view of the deterioration of religious scholarship during the Maraboutic Crisis. The breakdown of scholarly institutions during this period led Ibn Nāṣir’s contemporaries to lose touch with authentic riwāya and the knowledge production practices of Islam’s transmitted sciences. As a result, “ignorance” (jahl) became prevalent in Moroccan society. This expressed itself through the widespread adoption of social and religious practices that lacked a sound chain of transmission or basis in the Prophetic sunna.

Beyond his jurisprudence, Ibn Nāṣir sought to popularize critical engagement with the sunna among the Nāṣirī community. As shaykh of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya, Ibn Nāṣir dedicated special study circles to transmitting the canonical hadith corpus throughout the year. These included an annual narration (sard) of Sahih al-Bukhari during Ramadan. Both Ibn Nāṣir and Ahmad al-Khalīfa were recognized for transmitting hadith through

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49 al-Darʾī and al-Ṣanḥājī, al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣiryya, 50.
50 Amālik, Jawānib, v. 2, 294
authentic chains. More so, they include commentary on those chains’ authority and the ḥadīth texts’ meaning (riwāya and dirāya) during their narration sessions. They also strove to acquire ‘high’ chains of transmission in the canonical ḥadīth books to increase their scholarly authority. During their lifetimes, Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa acquired ʿijāzas from leading Moroccan and Middle Eastern ḥadīth scholars.

One aspect of increasing public literacy in ḥadīth texts was increasing awareness about the authentic ḥadīth corpus. Legal responsa in the Ajwība show that Ibn Nāṣir played a curatorial role for his community to aid their engagement with Prophetic traditions. In one opinion, he is asked to give the names of the authoritative ḥadīth books as well as those books that are unreliable and should be avoided. He responds that he’s not able to name all of those texts but, to be safe, the reader should limit himself to the six canonical ḥadīth books: Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, the Sunan of Abū Dāwud, al-Nasāʾī, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Māja.\(^{51}\) He adds that Mālik b. Anas’s Muwaṭṭa’ contains some mawqūf traditions,\(^{52}\) but can be considered an additional authoritative ḥadīth collection.\(^{53}\) He then gives the definition of forged (mawḍūʿ) ḥadīth and explains that these should be avoided. Lastly, he defines weak (daʿīf) ḥadīth and states they cannot be used to permit or prohibit actions, but can be used as the basis for supererogatory acts of worship on occasion.\(^{54}\) Questions like these indicate a general lack of familiarity with ḥadīth texts and their regimes of authority within Ibn Nāṣir’s milieu. His clear and

\(^{51}\) al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 186.

\(^{52}\) Mawqūf traditions are those stated on the authority of one of the Prophet Muḥammad’s companions without a documented link (sanad) to the Prophet himself.

\(^{53}\) al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 186.

\(^{54}\) al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwība al-Nāṣirīyya, 186.
comprehensible responses helped to define an authoritative hadīth corpus for his audience and to educate them in how to directly engage with hadīth texts.

In his correspondence, Ibn Nāṣir repeatedly urged his students to use hadīth as the criterion to verify their religious knowledge. Writing to the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya while on ḥajj, he calls on his adepts (fuqarāʾ) to find and closely follow “the truth” (al-ḥaqq) in their affairs.\(^5^5\) Elsewhere, he writes, “I advise you to revere God Almighty and obey Him according to ‘the right method’ (al-manhaj al-qawīm).”\(^5^6\) This involves grounding one’s religious practice in the authentic (ṣahīh) sunna as well as seeking the guidance of religious scholars “to remove uncertainty” in religious affairs.\(^5^7\) Later, in the same letter, he obliges his students to seek knowledge and transmit it to their families and communities:

> Concern yourself with the shariʿa, assist the weak among you and educate the ignorant. Be lenient and not excessively strict… Do not look down on the weak and the poor… feed them from what you eat and clothe them from what you wear. Teach them what they do not know of their religion. This is obligatory (wājib) upon you, just as it is obligatory to teach your sons, your wives, your daughters and whomever God has placed in your care. Certainly, you will be asked about this on the Day of Judgment. And avoid the people of bidʿa and those who are astray…\(^5^8\)

These commands clearly illustrate Ibn Nāṣir’s emphasis on seeking authoritative knowledge to serve as the basis of one’s religious practice. He viewed this knowledge as existing within Islam’s foundational texts, namely the authoritative Prophetic sunna.

\(^5^5\) al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣirīyya, 268.
\(^5^6\) “Nāṣirī Letters,” 41.
\(^5^7\) “Nāṣirī Letters,” 41-2.
\(^5^8\) “Nāṣirī Letters,” 43.
Furthermore, he calls his community to engage critically with the sources of religious knowledge available to them, rather than deferring to established precedents.

Ibn Nāṣir’s son, ʿAḥmad al-Khalīfa, specifically comments on the relationship between evidence and taqlīd in his correspondence with adepts. In a letter to the Nāṣirī community in Marrakech, al-Khalīfa encourages his followers to “study your religion and prioritize [acquiring] knowledge of God, His commandments, and the etiquette of being in His presence.”59 Later, he writes, “You should rely on the authoritative Prophetic hadīth (mā saḥfa), or what is acceptable (ḥasan) and be careful not to act upon forged traditions (mawḍūʿ).”60 al-Khalīfa echoes this sentiment in a different letter to adepts in Dukkāla:

I advise you to revere God and to follow the sunna... it is [incumbent] upon you to follow the example of our earliest pious predecessors (al-salaf al-awwal) and not to rely on anything else. Do not be at odds with the community and do not disregard the opinions of [earlier] authorities (al-aʾimma). Follow the most correct [position] in every discipline so that you may be among those who hear what people say and follow the best of it. Stick closely to authoritative proofs (al-hujja) and seek such for all of your deeds so that you may practice your religion with insight (ʿalā baṣira). [Seek also] to follow the example of earlier scholars, but not those who practice taqlīd.61

He then quotes three verses from the Qurʾan that emphasize the importance of having insight into one’s religious practice in order to avoid following those who may be led astray by their poor judgment:

God Almighty says, “Say: this is my path, I call to God with insight”. God says: “Who is more astray than one who follows their passion rather than guidance from God?” God the Exalted says: “Do not follow many paths, and so be separated from His path.”62

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59 “Nāṣirī Letters,” 90.
60 “Nāṣirī Letters,” 92.
61 “Nāṣirī Letters,” 112.
The use of these verses indicates al-Khalīfa’s view of scholars who practice *taqlīd*. Failing to adopt a critical framework places one at risk at being led astray by accepting the positions of previous scholars who may have been misguided. Yet al-Khalīfa does not fully endorse breaking with tradition. He encourages his students to follow the ways of earlier scholars through a critical framework. This is the insight he refers to and which the Qur’an references. It is only through such critical engagement that one can know whether their religious practice is based on authoritative knowledge.

*Knowledge Production at the Nāširiyya Zāwiya*

The Nāširiyya zāwiya provided Maḥammad b. Nāṣir with the space to establish knowledge producing institutions that supported his critical scholarly discourse. The lodge’s safety and prosperity facilitated the establishment of regular study circles (*majālis*, sing. *majlis*), which served as sites for the critical engagement of source texts, especially in *ḥadīth*. By the late 1050s/1640s, students began to flock to Tamgrūt to take advantage of the Nāširiyya zāwiya’s prestige and scholarly amenities. Chief among these was the lodge’s manuscript library. Though it began as Ibn Nāṣir’s personal book collection, this archive grew into a library that housed thousands of manuscripts during Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure as the Nāširiyya’s *shaykh*. These texts covered all Islamic disciplines and provided Nāṣirī scholars with the discursive resources to perform *taḥqīq*. The Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan, established by Ibn Nāṣir in 1070/1660, supported these efforts. Regular access to book markets across North Africa and the Middle East enabled the Nāširiyya’s leaders to stock their library with rare and valuable texts. The ḥajj pilgrimage
also connected the Nāṣiriyā to like-minded scholars in these regions. Ibn Nāṣir, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and their students avidly engaged with their peers to acquire prestigious chains of transmission in the canonical ḥadīth books. This served their mission of elevating the study of ḥadīth in Morocco by bolstering their authority in this field.

A. Study Circle Practice and Curriculum

As was the case across the pre-Modern Muslim world, the majlis, or study circle, served as the primary scholarly institution at the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya. It was the chief site for the transmission of scriptural knowledge and the interpretation of texts. Additionally, the majlis allowed for the formation of what Dale Eickelman describes as “dyadic chains of student-teacher transmission.” These are the building blocks of the isnād. The study circle’s pedagogy was based on what anthropologist Brinkley Messick describes as “the recitational complex.” At its center was the text (sing. matn, pl. mutūn). While texts varied by subject, all mutūn share a discursive openness that demands explanation. This came in the form of a teacher’s verbal commentary, which was often compiled into a written text, known as a sharḥ. When combined with such explanation, a matn becomes fully comprehensible. This is how Ibn Nāṣir studied as a

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66 Messick, The Calligraphic State, 34.
67 Messick, The Calligraphic State, 30-1.
young student. Later, he employed the majlis to transmit texts as well as the critical scholarly practices that comprised his taḥqīq-based approach.

In his youth, Ibn Nāṣir gained a solid grounding in Islam’s transmitted and rational sciences. His first teacher was his father, with whom he memorized the Qur’an. His second teacher, ‘Alī b. Yūsuf al-Dar‘ī, was considered “proficient in the rational and transmitted sciences.” Under ‘Alī b. Yūsuf, Ibn Nāṣir studied the Arabic language, tafsīr, ḥadīth, fiqh, logic and the remaining transmitted disciplines. Ibn Nāṣir’s next teacher was Muḥammad al-Kabīr al-Dādašī (d. 1029/1619). al-Dādašī was a student of Muḥammad b. Mahdī al-Jarārī (d. 979/1571), an influential scholar who was based out of zāwiya al-Hannā’, southeast of Tamgrūt. al-Jarārī is credited with saying, “The essence of teaching (iqrā’) is to provide a correct reading of the source text (matn) and to explain its troublesome elements.” This approach focused on the clear, comprehensible explanation of mutūn without delving into tangential subject matter. It also emphasized language arts and grammar as instrumental sciences to assist with the proper reading and interpretation of texts. Ibn Nāṣir applied al-Jarārī’s pedagogy after completing his studies with al-Dādašī. Upon his return to his hometown of Aghlān, he began to teach and lead prayers at the communal mosque. After 1040/1630, when he became the scholar-in-

71 al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar, v. 2, 504-6
residence at the Tamgrūt zāwiya, Ibn Nāṣir developed an academic program that took students gradually through Islam’s transmitted sciences until they were properly trained to practice *tahqīq*.\(^75\)

**Figure 3.1**  
*Ibn Nāṣir’s Curriculum for Beginners*

| Hadīth          | *al-Anwār al-Saniyya fī al-Alfāẓ al-Sunnīyya* by Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbī  
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Arba‘īn Hadīth</em> by al-Nawawī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td><em>al-Ṣughrā</em> by al-Sanūṣī, with al-Mallālī’s commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiqh</td>
<td><em>Mukhtasar Khalīl</em> by Khalīl b. Isḥāq al-Jundī, with Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī’s commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td><em>al-Ajurūmiyya</em> by Ibn Ajurrūm, with al-Makūdī’s commentary</td>
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The first step in this system was memorizing the Qur’an.\(^76\) As in other parts of the Islamic West, students at the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya memorized the Qur’an by writing out verses on a wooden slate (*lawḥ*). This taught them how to read and write during the course of memorization. Ibn Nāṣir focused on inculcating accuracy and precision (*dabṭ*) in his students’ writing of Qur’an.\(^77\) A concomitant feature of Qur’anic memorization was learning one or more of the canonical modes of reciting the Qur’an, known as the seven

\(^75\) al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, *al-Ajwiba*, 176.  
\(^76\) Ṣamīlī, *Jawānīb*, v. 2, 283.  
\(^77\) Ṣamīlī, *Jawānīb*, v. 2, 283.
or ten qira’āt. Ibn Nāṣir and his students strictly adhered to a recitational style known as *al-waqaft al-sunni* in which the reciter pauses at the end of each verse.⁷⁸

After memorizing Qur’ān, Ibn Nāṣir’s students moved on to the Arabic language arts. Subjects like grammar (*nahw*), rhetoric (*balāgha*) and poetics (*’arūd*) were a central focus of his teaching and scholarship and many of his students, both beginners and advanced, considered him a peerless authority in these fields.⁷⁹ In addition to teaching the *Ajurrūmiyyah*, Ibn Nāṣir was considered to be the last scholar in Morocco and the Middle East who taught Sibawayh’s *Kitāb*. He also taught all of Ibn Mālik’s *Tashīl* from memory.⁸⁰ After Arabic language arts, students at the Nāṣirīyya *zāwīya* studied Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as part of their primary education. As we saw above, Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa emphasized their community’s responsibility to have at least a basic

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⁷⁸ This contrasted with the prevalent *al-waqaft al-Ḥabīṭ* style which was first recorded by Muḥammad al-Ḥabīṭ (d. 930/1523). In *al-waqaft al-Ḥabīṭ*, the reciter pauses their recitation according to the Qur’ān’s grammar. Ibn Nāṣir rejected this practice because of its variance with Prophetic practice and the precedent established by earlier Qur’ān reciters. Defense of *al-waqaft al-sunni* against *al-waqaft al-Ḥabīṭ* was a conspicuous feature of the Nāṣirīyya’s education program, both in Tamgrīt and in its branches, especially in the Sus region. Many well-regarded Qur’ān reciters taught at the Nāṣirīyya *zāwīya* during the 11th/12th and 12th/13th centuries. For a brief bio of al-Ḥabīṭ see Najāt al-Marīnī, “al-Ḥabīṭ, al-Ṣammāfī, Muḥammad,” in *Ma’lamat al-Maghrib* (Sale, Morocco: Maṭābī Salā, 2005), v. 22, 7494-5. For more discussion of al-Ḥabīṭ’s legacy, see “Abū ʾAbd Allāh al-Ḥabīṭ Wādī Waqf al-Qur’ān bi-l-Maghrib - 1 -,” *Da’wat al-Ḥaqiq* 106 (n.d.), http://www.habous.gov.ma/daouat-alhaq/item/2484; See also ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 286ff. See also al-Hodaykī’s biography of Aḥmad al-Ṣawwābī, the Sūṣī Nāṣirī scholar who championed *al-waqaft al-sunni* in *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥodaykī*, v. 1, 95-102. See also the career of ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Bakr al-Tanwiṣī discussed in Chapter 5. al-Tanwiṣī was a Nāṣirī scholar from the Sahara who fought vigorously to reform the predominate styles of Qur’ānic psalmody in the region to conform with the sunna.


understanding of *fiqh* and theology. Ibn Nāṣir was a highly respected jurist himself and many of his students served as judges and jurists across Morocco.

Ibn Nāṣir also composed several important didactic works that he incorporated into his teaching curriculum. The first was a short poem entitled *Musā’ adat al-Ikhwān*, a short poem treating the obligatory areas of Maliki *fiqh*.⁸¹ Ibn Nāṣir wrote this text early in his career and it circulated widely before he became *shaykh* of the Nāṣiriyya *zāwiya*.⁸² Several of Ibn Nāṣir’s early students wrote commentaries of this text as well.⁸³ Ibn Nāṣir also composed a didactic compilation of praises of the Prophet Muḥammad, entitled *Ghanīmat al-‘Abd al-Munīb*.⁸⁴ Modeled after al-Jazūlī’s *Dalā’il al-Khayrat*, Ibn Nāṣir alphabetically arranged his supplications and deliberately employed refined vocabulary to encourage the study of Arabic within the Nāṣiriyya community. This text circulated widely and was commented upon by generations of

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⁸¹ Many copies of this poem exist in Moroccan manuscript libraries. Morocco’s Royal Library, al-Maktaba al-Hasaniyya, contains nearly a dozen, many of which are included in mixed volumes (sing. *majmūʿ a*). These bear different titles: *Musā’ adat al-Ikhwān*: 13941, 13972, 13597, 13587, 13561, 13508, 11934, 10645 *Manzūma fī Qawāʿid al-Islām*: 4572, 883

Morocco’s National Library, Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc, holds several copies of *Musā’ adat al-Ikhwān*, though only some are catalogued: ±2138, ±2223, ±2214. There is also a copy of the same poem under the title *Manzūma fī-l-Fiqh*: ±1238. The Nāṣiriyya *Zāwiya* Library in Tamgrūt holds a copy of *Musa’ adat al-Ikhwan* in majmūʿ #3050.

⁸² This is the text that was commented on by the Sūsī *faqīh* Yabūrak al-Samlālī in 1642/1052. al-Maktaba al-Hasaniyya holds two copies of this commentary: #13476 and #6013. Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc also holds a copy: ±1064.

⁸³ al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī mentions that Mubārak al-‘Anbārī and ’Abd al-Mālik al-Tajmū’atī both commented on this poem. See *al-Durar*, v. 2, 531.

Nāṣiri adepts across Morocco.\(^{85}\) *al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣiriyya* was also widely disseminated.\(^{86}\) Additionally, he wrote a well-received summary of the *hajj* pilgrimage rites according to the Mālikī school.\(^{87}\)

While Ibn Nāṣir’s curriculum for beginners included the use of written commentaries, he preferred to directly engage with source texts when teaching more advanced students. This allowed him to demonstrate the process of *taḥqīq* in the classroom. An early example of this approach can be found in the curriculum that Ibn Nāṣir’s brother, al-Ḥusayn b. Nāṣir, studied while Ibn Nāṣir served as the scholar-in-residence at the Tamgrūṭ zāwiyā. Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī writes that, over the span of six years, Ibn Nāṣir taught his brother to memorize the Qur’ān and the following texts in *fiqh*, Arabic language arts, dogmatic theology, and *tafsīr*:\(^{88}\)

\(^{85}\) Muḥammad al-Manūnī quotes from al-ʾAdalūnī, one of the *Ghanīma*’s commentators, who described its popularity among the Nāṣirī community: “Pious people dedicated themselves to reciting [the *Ghanīma*], excellent fuqarā’ circulated it among themselves, and the keepers of secrets took it as their constant companion, so that it became an object of their remembrance by day and night.” See Muḥammad al-Manūnī, “Mu’allaṣfat al-Maghribiya ṭī-l-Ṣalāt wa-l-Tasfīm ‘alā Khayr al-Bariyya Ṣalla Allāh ʿalayhi wa Sallim,” *Daʿwat al-Ḥaqq* 18, no. 4 (May 1977): nt. 47, p. 31.

\(^{86}\) See, for example, Chapter 5’s discussion of its spread in the Sahara.

\(^{87}\) Ḍāʾūlīk, *Jawānīb*, v. 2, 300.

\(^{88}\) al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, *al-Durar*, v. 2, 520-1. Al-Hashtūkī uses the verb *ahfaza* to describe these studies, which implies that al-Ḥusayn memorized these texts as well.
This list contains a few notable features. The first is the absence of works in *hadith* and Sufism. It seems that it was only after becoming a *shaykh* that Ibn Nāṣir began to teach these disciplines. Additionally, a plurality of these works address the Arabic language arts. Omitting the Qur’an, five of the remaining eleven works deal with Arabic grammar and poetics, as compared to three works in *fiqh*, two in theologoy and Ibn ’Atiyya’s *tafsir*. The focus on language arts emphasizes Ibn Nāṣir’s text-centric approach. Following al-Mahdī al-Jarārī’s example, Ibn Nāṣir’s focused on directly engaging with primary texts, which he taught in a study circle using his own extemporaneous commentary. In fact, this list contains only two commentaries: Ibn ’Atiyya’s *tafsir* and al-Ḥawdī’s work in theology. When al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī first came to Tamgrūt in 1050/1640, he studied with Ibn Nāṣir in a similar way. Ḥāmid ’Amālik writes that al-Yūsī attended Ibn Nāṣir’s study circles in Ibn Mālik’s *Tashīl*, the *Madkhal* of Ibn al-Hājj, al-Ghazzālī’s *Ihya*’ *Ulūm al-Dīn, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṭabaqāt al-Sha’rānī* and other primary texts.

**Figure 3.2**

Texts taught by Ibn Nāṣir to al-Ḥusayn b. Nāṣir, c. 1040s/1630s

- the Qur’an
- Ibn Mālik’s *Khulāṣa* in Arabic Grammar
- *al-Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī in Mālikī *fiqh*
- *al-Mukhtasar* of Khalīl b. Ishāq in Mālikī *fiqh*
- al-Wadūnī’s versification of Ibn Hisham’s *Mughnī al-Labīb*
- al-Sanūsī’s *al-Ṣughrā* in Theology
- *al-Ajurrāmiyya* in Arabic grammar
- al-Ḥawdī’s commentary in *’aqīda*
- the *tafsīr* of Ibn ’Atiyya
- *al-Khazrajīyya* in poetics
- *al-Mudawwana* in Maliki Fiqh
- *al-Tashīl* by Ibn Mālik in Arabic Grammar
without the aid of commentaries.\footnote{Amālīk, Jawānib, v. 2, 238. In his study of literature during the ‘Alawite period, historian Muḥammad al-Akhḍar highlights the relationship between Ibn Nāṣir and al-Ŷūsī as one of the most significant scholarly bonds of the 11th/17th century. He also argues that Ibn Nāṣir transmitted his source-critical approach to al-Yusi. See al-Akhḍar, al-Ḥayā al-Adabiyya, 78.}

Ibn Nāṣir’s study circles were sites for students’ critical engagement with Islam’s discursive scholarly tradition. Guided by a masterful teacher, they navigated the different transmitted disciplines and learned their relationship to one another. Their teacher’s commentary demonstrated the practice of *taḥqīq*: how to critically analyze primary sources and derivative texts to arrive at ‘true’ positions. In this way, Ibn Nāṣir acted as a scholarly exemplar for his students to emulate. Many of his students describe the positive impact this *shaykh* had on their early scholarly development. Ibrāhīm al-Sībā‘ī writes that Ibn Nāṣir was his first teacher and with “with him I began and completed my studies… I learned much from him and came to rely and depend upon him.”\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, “Fāṭḥ Malik al-Nāṣir,” folio 32.} These lines are somewhat figurative, as al-Sībā‘ī would go on to study with many more scholars in Morocco and the Middle East. However, his language illustrates Ibn Nāṣir’s important role in laying the foundation for his future scholarly career.

Safety, prosperity and prestige also attracted outside scholars to teach in Tamgrūṭ in a variety of disciplines according to their expertise. Abu Sālim al-‘Ayyāshī, the traveler and *hadīth* scholar, taught *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* at the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya by virtue of his high *iṣnād* in that text.\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, *al-Durar*, v. 1, 174.} Ibrāhīm al-Sabā‘ī, settled in Tamgrūṭ and gained fame for his high *iṣnād* in the different modes of Qur’anic recitation.\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, *al-Durar*, v. 1, 256.} Aḥmad al-Ḥashtūḵī settled in
Tamgrūt to teach after his career as a judge in Taghāzā.  

 shortcomings as a judge in Taghāzā.  

 93 ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Tadghī came to Tamgrūt during Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure and excelled as a teacher of hadīth sciences, theology and literature.  

 94 al-Khalīfa’s closest student al-Ḥusayn al-Shurāḥbīlī also excelled as a teacher in Tamgrūt and later in the lodges that he established in the Sūs.  

 95 These scholars were given housing and appointments as imams and sermonizers in the zāwiya’s congregational and smaller mosques. In addition to these material considerations, Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa encouraged many of their scholars to stay in Tamgrūt by marrying them to their daughters, sisters and other relatives. Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī married one of Ibn Nāṣir’s daughters,  

 96 and Muḥammad b. Abī Yaḥya al-Tilimsānī (d. 1112/1701) married two.  

 97 Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Kansūsī (d. 1164/1751) married one of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s relatives.  

 98 The calligrapher ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maknāsī (d.c. 12th/18th century) married al-Khalīfa’s sister before settling in Tamgrūt where he served as the chief copyist.  

B. The Nāṣiriyya zāwiya library

  

 Ibn Nāṣir’s taḥqīq-based scholarship demanded heavy engagement with books and manuscripts. We see this in his work as a copyist, editor, teacher, commentator and author. Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī writes that early in his career:

[Ibn Nāṣir] busied himself with teaching God’s servants, perusing texts (muṭāla’a) and compiling, copying and purchasing texts […] He also spent his time correcting manuscripts and comparing copies to their originals (muqābala). He also wrote marginalia and other commentary, especially on copies of [Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim].

He adds that Ibn Nāṣir copied al-Qāmūs al-Muhīṭ, al-Qāmūs al-Wāṣīṭ, al-Murādī’s commentary on Ibn Mālik’s Tashīl and portions of al-‘Iqd al-Farīd by hand. Ibn Nāṣir’s commitment to book production fully expressed itself in the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s library, which grew out of his personal collection of scholarly works. After he became a shaykh, Ibn Nāṣir’s personal library became public and grew incrementally. Limited by his lodge’s humble circumstances, Ibn Nāṣir reportedly stored his books on the ground in his bedroom. When a student gave him a straw mat for him and his family to sleep on, he used it to store his books instead. As the zāwiya’s resources expanded, Ibn Nāṣir invested large sums of money to expand his library. He once paid 800 mithqāl of gold for a copy of al-Ghazzālī’s Iḥyā’ ‘Ulam al-Dīn and he paid 80 mithqāl to have Abū Nu‘aym al-İsfahānī’s Hilyat al-Awliyā’ copied. Students and visitors also gifted books to the shaykh. Additionally, the ḥajj pilgrimage provided an opportunity for Ibn Nāṣir to acquire books otherwise unavailable in Morocco:

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104 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 300. This equals approximately 120 ounces of gold.
105 This was money that Ibn Nāṣir had originally set aside to perform the ḥajj pilgrimage. See ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2., 300.
106 ʿAmālik writes that Ibn Nāṣir was once gifted a copy of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. See ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 331.
Figure 3.3

Books purchased in the Middle East by Mahammad b. Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa
(currently housed in the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya library)

- A second copy of al-Ghazzālī’s Ḥiyā’ purchased by Mahammad b. Nāṣir 108
- Nasīm al-Riyāḍ, purchased by Mahammad b. Nāṣir 109
- al-Shambrāmallīsī’s ḥāshiya on Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī’s commentary of the Shamā’il of al-Tirmidhī. Copied in 1091/1680 and purchased by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa 110
- al-Qāhirī’s commentary on al-Suyūṭī’s al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaghīr, purchased by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa 111
- al-Suyūṭī’s al-Durr al-Manṭhūr, purchased by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa 112
- al-Damārī’s al-Sharḥ al-Ṣaghīr on the Mukhtāṣar of Khalīl b. Ḥishāq, purchased by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa 113

Upon returning from hajj in 1122/1712, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa began construction on a stand-alone library to house the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya’s book collection. This project was completed in 1123/1711. al-Khalīfa employed artisans from Fez who installed a set of stained glass windows in the library. These windows cast different shades of light based on the position of the sun to help readers keep track of time during the day. al-Khalīfa

108 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #2114, written in mashriqī script.
109 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #1339.
110 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #2057.
111 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #990, written in mashriqī script.
112 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #1149, written in mashriqī script.
113 al-Fihris al-Wasfī, #1020, written in mashriqī script.
also instituted a filing system that organized books based on topic, and assigned each genre its own distinctive symbol.\footnote{Amâlik, Jawânib, v. 2, 332.}

The Nâşiriyya zâwiya library continued to grow after al-Khalîfa’s death. Nâşirî shaykhs Yûsuf al-Nâşirî (d. 1783/1197) and Abu Bakr b. ‘Alî b. Yûsuf (d. 1281/1864) continued to purchase, gifts and copying. Moroccan Sultan Sîdî Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allâh (r. 1204/1790) donated books to the zâwiya during Yûsuf al-Nâşirî’s tenure as did many of the zâwiya’s scholars and students.\footnote{Amâlik, Jawânib, v. 2, 334.} At some point in the 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century, the Nâşiriyya zâwiya instituted group book copying. Under this system, large texts were divided into 10- or 20-page sections and distributed to a team of copyists who operated under the shaykh’s supervision. This cut down on copying time and greatly improved the zâwiya’s capacity for text production.\footnote{Interview with Ahmâd Zahrî, researcher at al-Maktaba Ḥasaniyya, in Rabat, Morocco. December, 2016.}
Perhaps inspired by the lending practices he witnessed in Medina during his last ḥajj, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa established his zāwiya’s library as a lending library. Students and scholars were able to check out books on an annual basis. The zāwiya’s book keeper recorded borrowers’ names in a register and they were expected to return their checked-out books every year to the zāwiya at the end of Ramadan. This system seems to have worked effectively up until the 13th/19th century. At this point, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī (d. 1239/1823) wrote:

We used to find that the zāwiya’s leader would find whoever was upright, strong and knowledgeable and delegate them to oversee the library’s books. He would

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117 Photograph by author at the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya, December, 2016.
118 See Discussion in Chapter 4.
enter the library and take the books that the students needed and then give all of
the students what they needed and recorded it in a register. At the beginning of
every year, at the end of Ramadan, he would present the register and renew the
books checked out by the teachers and students.

Now, the lodge’s leaders ignore [the old lending system] and as a result many
books have been lost. They no longer know the library’s contents so that, now, if
you ask them for a book they won’t know whether or not it is in the library.
[Many books] have been taken away and were returned only by ransom or other
means.  

To emphasize his disappointment, he then quotes Aḥmad al-Khaliṭa’s exhortation to his
family to protect the zāwiya’s books: “If you preserve them and engage with them
appropriately, then God will preserve you and bring you more books. And vice versa.”

The closest record we have of the NāṣiriyatāWIya’s holdings at its peak
comes in a letter written in 1182/1768 by Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣiri to his teacher, the
muhaddith Abū Aʿlā’ al-ʿIrāqī (d.c. 13/19th century).  

al-ʿIrāqī’s had asked Ibn ʿAbd
al-Salām about the NāṣiriyatāWIya’s holdings of texts in the transmitted sciences to
compare its collection with Fez’s al-Qarawiyyīn library, and other private collections. Ibn
ʿAbd al-Salām wrote that, though he did not take the time to fully investigate the
zāwiya’s collection due to its expansive size, he found many rare books in the fields
about which al-ʿIrāqī had inquired. He opens his letter with a brief overview of the
library’s holdings, which include many works in history, more than 40 distinct works in
tafsīr, the complete works of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 910/1505), a few musnad
collections, many copies of the canonical hadīth books, and other “common books in

\[120\] Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣiri, al-Mazāyiā, 146.

\[121\] Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣiri, al-Mazāyiā, 146.

In addition to this general information, he mentions 41 ‘rare’ works in the hadīth sciences, history and Prophetic biography by name. Modern scholars have offered various estimates of the size of Nāṣirīyya zāwiyā library’s collection. Gutelius writes that the library once held as many as 50,000 volumes. The French traveler, the Marquis de Segonzac, visited Tamgrūt at the turn of the 20th century and estimated that the zāwiyā’s library held around 10,000 volumes. Recent catalogs place the library’s current collection at around 4,000 volumes. The information provided by Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām helps us to estimate how many volumes have been lost from the late-12th/mid-18th century to today. Only eight of the 41 titles mentioned by Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām are recorded in the library’s most recent catalog. Additionally, only 17 of the remaining 34 texts are held in Morocco’s National Library. While this data is not conclusive, it supports Ibn ‘Abd al-Salām’s claim that by the 13th/19th century the zāwiyā began to lose books and its library’s collection diminished greatly. A conservative estimate based on this data would place its past

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123 al-Kattānī, Tarīkh al-Maktabāt, 135.
127 Estimates of the library’s current size are also inconsistent due to its reorganization in the 1970s. According to oral reports gathered by the author during fieldwork in January, 2017, this process resulted in the relocation of approximately 2,500 texts to the Biblioteque Nationale in Rabat. ‘Amālik’s most recent account of the zāwiyā’s current holdings places them at 4,123 texts. See Jawāniḥ, v. 2, 340.
128 Based on data from Ḥamīd Lāḥmar’s al-Fihris al-Wasfi.
129 Title and author search performed online on April 26, 2016: http://opac.bnrm.ma:8000/cgi-bin/gw_49_5F/chameleon.
contents between 10,000 – 20,000 volumes. That number could have been much higher if we consider the zāwiya’s wealth and prominence in the 12th/18th century.130

C. Acquiring and Disseminating ‘High’ Chains of Transmission in Ḥadīth

In addition to promoting critical engagement with the hadīth corpus, Ibn Nāṣir and his students sought to revive the epistemological authority of hadīth by acquiring and disseminating prestigious or ‘high’ chains of transmission.131 Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī writes that Ibn Nāṣir spent his afternoons transmitting the six canonical hadīth books in a dedicated majlis at the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya. After finishing one book, he would move on to another, progressing through them over the course of a calendar year. Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām notes that these sessions included Ibn Nāṣir’s explanations of the meanings of the traditions, clarification of any difficult vocabulary and analysis of their chains of narration, so that students acquired the transmission (riwāya) of the hadīth and an understanding (dirāya) of them.132 Ibn Nāṣir reserved the month of Ramadan for the public reading (sard) of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, widely considered the most authoritative hadīth collection. At first, he timed the completion of al-Bukhārī to coincide with the conclusion of Ramadan. As time went on, his students requested he delay this event to

130 In a field interview conducted in January, 2017, ʿĀḥmad ʿAmālik stated that, at its peak, the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya’s library was bigger “that we can imagine.”
131 Chains of transmission derive their authority based on their proximity to their source. For hadīth, the fewer transmitters in a given isnād the ‘higher’ it was and therefore more prestigious. The pursuit of high isnād was a major incentive for scholarly travel dating back to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad’s companions. See Jan Just Witkam, “High and Low: al-Isnād al-ʿĀlī in Theory and Practice of Transmitting Science,” in Manuscript Notes as Documentary Sources, ed. Andreas Gorké and Konrad Hirschler, 2011, 125–40.
'Ashūrā’, the 10th of Muḥarram, to accommodate their travel to Tamgrūt from different parts of Morocco. Everyone in attendance for the khatm of al-Bukhārī benefitted from the blessing of this occasion and could count themselves as having received the text from Ibn Nāṣir.133

The popularity of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī’s public reading in Tamgrūt not only reflects the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood’s popularity but also Ibn Nāṣir’s authority as a hadīth transmitter. This was based on his acquisition of high isnāds from scholars in Morocco and the Middle East. Ibn Nāṣir began seeking authoritative chains of transmission in ḥadīth texts before becoming shaykh of the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya. In 1051-2/1641-2 he and his brother, al-Ḥusayn, studied with and received an ijāza from Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-Mirgīthī (d. 1089/1678), a student of the aforementioned Abū Yūsuf al-Sugtānī and a leading Moroccan hadīth scholar in the 11th/17th century.134 al-Mirgīthī’s ijāza describes his positive impression of the Nāṣīrī brother’s knowledge, character and piety. He writes that the three read through portions of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, and other texts in ḥadīth, astronomy and mathematics.135 At the conclusion of their time together, al-

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135 The texts that they studied were as follows: (in “Fath al-Malik al-Nāṣir,” folio 5)

- Parts of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and al-Muwatta’
- al-Anwār al-Sanniyya fi al-Álājud al-Sunniyya by Ibn Juzayy al-Kalbī
- Rawdat al-Azhār fī Ḥilm Waqt al-Layl wa-l-Nahār by Abū Zayd ʿAbd al-Rahmān b. Ghālib al-Fāsī
- Munyat al-Ḥisāb, Ibn Ghāzī’s versification of Ibn al-Bannā al-Marākushi’s Talkhīṣ ʿAmal al-Ḥisāb

Mirghīthī authorized Ibn Nāṣir and al-Husayn to transmit all the works for which he himself had and *ijāza.*

al-Mirghīthī’s *ijāza* linked Ibn Nāṣir to al-Sugtānī and Ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥasanī (d. 1042/1632), the two leading *ḥadīth* scholars in 11th/17th century Morocco. Ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥasanī transmitted *ḥadīth* on the authority of Aḥmad b. Ṭāhir al-Manjūr (d. 995/1587), who was regarded as holding the highest *isnād* in his generation. Ibn Ṭāhir also transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Qaṣṣār and ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Fīgūguū, whom al-Mirghīthī describes as holding the “highest sanad in [Ṣaḥīḥ] *al-Bukhārī*...” Abū Yusuf al-Sugtānī narrated an unusually high *isnād* in *ḥadīth* by virtue of his travels to the Middle East and contact with scholars in the Arabian peninsula. al-Sugtānī narrated *ḥadīth* directly from Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī (d. 1041/1631), a student of Sālim al-Sanhūrī (d. 945/1538), considered the greatest *ḥadīth* transmitter of his generation in the Muslim world. These chains are significant for their height and meaning within Ibn Nāṣir’s historical context. Connecting to Ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥasanī linked Ibn Nāṣir with Morocco’s elite chains of *ḥadīth* transmission. Additionally, his connection to Abū Yusuf al-Sugtānī also linked him to the leading *ḥadīth* scholars of the Middle East. This elevated Ibn Nāṣir’s scholarly authority on both a local and an

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international scale. With this authority, Ibn Nāṣir established the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s hadīth tradition.

**Figure 3.5**  
*Ibn Nāṣir’s highest chain of transmission in ḥadīth (c. 1051-2/1641-2)*

```
Maḥammad b. Nāṣir
    ↑
Ibn Saʿīd al-Mirgīthī
    ↑
Abū Yūsuf al-Sugtānī
    ↑
Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī
    ↑
Sālim al-Sanhūrī
```

Ibn Nāṣir continued to seek high chains of transmission in ḥadīth during his two ḥajj pilgrimages. While in Medina in 1070/1660, he studied with Muḥammad al-Bābalī (d. 1077/1666), the leading ḥadīth scholar in the Hijaz in the 17th century.¹⁴¹ al-Bābalī transmitted directly from Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī, as well as from al-Laqqānī’s teacher Sālim

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al-Sanhūrī. An *ijāza* written by al-Bābālī for Ibn Nāṣir in 1071/1661 links the Nāṣiriyya’s *shaykh* to this prestigious chain of transmission: ⁴¹²

**Figure 3.6**

*Ibn Nāṣir’s highest chain of transmission in ḥadīth (c. 1071/1661)*

```
Maḥammad b. Nāṣir
   ↑
Muḥammad al-Bābālī
   ↑
Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī
   ↑
Sālim al-Sanhūrī
```

Meeting with al-Bābālī shortened Ibn Nāṣir’s previous *isnād* to al-Laqqānī by one generation. This significantly improved his authority as a *ḥadīth* transmitter. Ibn Nāṣir was just one of a few Moroccan scholars who studied with al-Bābālī before his death. ⁴¹³ This connection made Ibn Nāṣir a sought out source of *ḥadīth* until his death in 1085/1675.

After succeeding his father, Aḥmad al-Khalīfā continued to develop the Nāṣiriyya *zāwiya* as a center for the transmission of *ḥadīth* texts. He took over the narration of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and continued to teach the other canonical *ḥadīth* books. ⁴¹⁴ al-Khalīfā

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¹⁴³ al-Kattānī mentions Ibn Nāṣir as one of the three prominent transmitters of al-Bābālī’s *isnād* along with his student, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī and their contemporary, Abd al-Rahman al-Fāsī, the son of `Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī. See `Abd al-Ḥayy b. `Abd al-Kabīr al-Kattānī, *Fihris al-Fahāris*, 211.
also positioned the Nāṣiriyya as champions of a new transmission of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Morocco. Traditionally, Moroccan ḥadīth scholars based their oral transmission of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī on the original text copy, or aṣl, of Abū ‘Imrān b. al-Sa’āda (d.c. 522/1128), which they viewed as very accurate and authoritative. Ibn al-Sa’āda copied his aṣl from the Andalusian muḥaddith Abū ‘Alī al-Ṣadaffī (d. 514/1120), with whom he studied in 492/1099. Through al-Ṣadaffī, Ibn Sa’āda’s text gained proximity to Abū Dharr al-Harawī (d. 434/1043), who was one of al-Bukhārī’s best regarded transmitters.

During his third hajj, al-Khalīfa broke with this tradition by purchasing a copy of the Yūnīniyya aṣl of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Mecca for 80 gold dinars. Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī (d. 701/1301) was an Egyptian muḥaddith who produced a copy of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Cairo in the second half of the 7th/13th century. The text went missing for a period before resurfacing as the primary source for Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qaṣṭalānī’s (d. 923/1517) commentary on Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī. After being used by al-Qaṣṭalānī, it again went missing before its re-discovery by the Moroccan muḥaddith Muḥammad al-Rūdānī (d. 1094/1683) in Damascus in 1094/1683. From there, the text made its way to Mecca where it was copied by ’Abd Allāh b. Sālim al-Bāṣrī (d. 1134/1722) in the early 12th/18th century. Aḥmad al-Khalīfa purchased his copy of the Yūnīniyya aṣl while on hajj in

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145 Yūsuf al-Kattānī, Madrasat al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī-l-Maghrib (Beirut: Dār Lisān al-‘Arab, n.d.), 74. The term aṣl refers to an authoritative manuscript copy of a ḥadīth text intended to serve as a documentary record of the text’s contents and their proper recitation.

146 Yūsuf al-Kattānī, Madrasat al-Imām al-Bukhārī, 75.

147 Yūsuf al-Kattānī, Madrasat al-Imām al-Bukhārī, 74. He writes that Ibn Sa’āda and al-Ṣadaffī reviewed this copy together, completing their review in 493/1100.

148 Ibid., 111.

149 Ibid., 112.
1117/1706.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} Upon his return to Morocco, he began using this text as the basis for the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s reading of al-Bukhārī during Ramadan. Later, he had a special 30-volume copy produced for this purpose.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} al-Khalīfa’s purchase of the Yūnīniyya asl introduced a new chain of transmission for Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī into Morocco.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} This served to distinguish the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya from other centers of hadīth scholarship in Morocco.\footnote{Ibid., 117.}

al-Khalīfa also strove to acquire high isnāds. These included his father’s chains and those of his father’s student Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} He also used the ḥajj as an opportunity to obtain ijāzas from notable hadīth transmitters in the Middle East. Among these were Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī (d. 1101/1690) and ʿAbd Allāh b. Sālim al-Baṣrī. al-Khalīfa describes meeting both of these scholars in al-Rīḥla al-Nāṣiriyya. He met with al-Kurānī the day of his departure from Medina and the two scholars exchanged ijāzas orally.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} al-Khalīfa and al-Ḥusayn al-Shuḥbīlī met al-Baṣrī while in Mecca, prior to his arrival in Medina, and received his ijāza orally. Later, al-Baṣrī sent a hand-written copy of the ijāza to Tamgrūt with one of al-Khalīfa’s companions.\footnote{Ibid., 117.} The document authorizes al-Khalīfa

\footnote{Ibid., 117.}
to transmit the six canonical hadith collections and the Muwatṭa’ through al-Baṣrī’s isnād to his various teachers, most importantly Muḥammad al-Bābālī.\footnote{al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, 440-1. al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī also records this ijāza, relying on al-Khalīfa’s Riḥla, in “Fath al-Malik al-Nāṣir,” folios 18-9.}

Fath al-Mālik al-Nāṣir records a third ijāza in hadith and Qur’ān from shaykh ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Dīmnātī (d. 1306/1888). al-Dīmnātī notes this was a rare isnād due to its unusually short length.\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, “Fath al-Malik al-Nāṣir,” folio 19.} This is one of two of al-Khalīfa’s isnāds through Shamharūsh. In al-Maṣūl, al-Mukhtār al-Sūsī records an isnād from Aḥmad al-Khalīfa to Shamharūsh followed by the Prophet Muḥammad, which he found in the fahrasa of ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Dīmnātī (d. 1306/1888). al-Dīmnātī notes this was the highest isnād in “the world.”\footnote{The transmission of knowledge to and from jinn was accepted by Muslim scholars, though the authority of such chains is contested.} Elsewhere, al-Dīmnātī writes that al-Khalīfa’s ijāza in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī through Ibrāhīm al-Kurānī is the highest sanad in Morocco.\footnote{al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, “Fath al-Malik al-Nāṣir,” folio 19.}

The Nāṣirī Scholarly tradition in Morocco (11th/17th – 12th/18th centuries)

The Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s scholarly tradition strongly influenced knowledge production across Morocco during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. As a unifying religious and scholarly figure, Ibn Nāṣir stimulated a broad, multidisciplinary revival of the Islamic sciences during the late-Maraboutic Crisis and early ’Alawī periods. We see

\footnote{al-Sūsī, al-Maṣūl, v. 13, 104.}

\footnote{Quoted in al-Sūsī, al-Maṣūl, v. 13, 98-9.}
this in the careers of his earliest students, many of whom were polymaths. These included al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī, who authored leading works in logic, lexicography, theology, epistemology, spirituality and was also renowned for his study circles on Qur’anic exegesis and spirituality. Ibn Nāṣir’s and al-Yūsī’s student Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī was similarly accomplished in Islam’s transmitted and rational disciplines, in addition to fields like astronomy. Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī (d. 1133/1721) was a third Nāṣirī polymath of this period. In addition to serving as Southern Morocco’s leading mufti during the late 11th/17th and early 12th/18th century, he published groundbreaking works in inheritance law (farāʾid), jurisprudence, astronomy, grammar and theology.

Other pioneering students of Ibn Nāṣir include the aforementioned Muḥammad al-Rūdānī, who began his scholarly career at the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya prior to relocating to Egypt. There he established himself as a leading hadīth transmitter and astronomer. Likewise, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī was a leading hadīth transmitter who also helped to revive the genre of riḥla literature in Morocco. Under Aḥmad al-Khalīfī, the Nāṣirī scholarly tradition expanded and grew more specialized as Nāṣirī scholars began to integrate into the ʿAlawī dynasty’s judicial-religious system. By the second half of the

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12th/18th century, Nāṣirī scholars occupied leading positions within Morocco’s religious field. Muhammad al-Tawūdī b. Süda (d. 1209/1795), the leader of the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya in Fez, served as Morocco’s leading mufī. His colleague, the jurist Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Bannā (d. 1163/1749), served as the chief overseer (nāẓir) of Fez’s pious endowments. He was also considered the spiritual heir of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa. The section below provides an overview of these Nāṣirī scholars, their colleagues and their scholarly contributions in Morocco during the late 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries

A. Fiqh

The restoration of the sharī‘a’s discursive and social authority was a major aspect of Ibn Nāṣir’s reformism. In addition to the Nāṣirīyya’s emphasis on following the sharī‘a, Ibn Nāṣir and his students actively supported the sharī‘a’s enforcement within Moroccan society. Throughout the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries, Nāṣirī scholars fulfilled this impetus by serving as judges, jurists and jurisconsults throughout Morocco, but especially in the rural South.

**Figure 3.7:**

*Nāṣirī Scholars in the Judiciary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Abd al-Mālik al-Tājmū`ati (d. 1118/1706)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Sijilmāsa, Tāfilált</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mubārak b. Muḥammad al-ʿAnbarī (d. 1090/1679)</td>
<td>Jurisconsult</td>
<td>Sijilmāsa, Tafīlālt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (d.c. 12th/18th century)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Figīg, Tafīlālt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Ṣaḥrāwī (d.c. 12th/18th century)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Figīg, Tafīlālt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd al-Kabīr al-Darʿī (d. 1115/1704)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Wādī Darʿa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī al-Tanmāsāwī (d.c. 12th/18th century)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Wādī Darʿa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Wisafan al-Sūsī (d. 1171/1758)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Nāṣiryya zāwiyā, Tamgrūt, Wādī Darʿa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Ṣaghīr al-Taylīf (d.c. 12th/18th century)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Dādas, Tafīlālt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd al-Mālik Nīt (d. 1155/1742)</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>Dimnāt, High Atlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abīmāth b. ʿAbd Allāh Awlūl (d. 1160/1747)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Tīnzūlīn, Wādī Darʿa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd Allāh al-Jazūlī (d.c. 12th/18th century)</td>
<td>Jurist, Judge</td>
<td>Ayt ʿAttāb, High Atlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Saḥāqī (d. c. 1180s/1760s-70s)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Ayt Wuzūḍ, High Atlas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Saḥāqī (d. 1155/1742)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Ayt Sādan, High Atlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Šāliḥ b. al-Muʿṭī al-Sharqāwī (d. 1139/1726)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Sharqāwiyya zāwiya, Abū Jaʿd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Muʿṭī b. Šāliḥ al-Sharqāwī (d. 1180/1766)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Sharqāwiyya zāwiya, Abū Jaʿd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Bannānī (d. 1163/1749)</td>
<td>Jurisconsult</td>
<td>Fez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Tāwudī b. Süda (d. 1209/1795)</td>
<td>Jurisconsult</td>
<td>Fez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʿĀlī Barakah al-Tīṭwānī (d. 1120/1708)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Tiṭwān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Warzāzī (d. 1179/1766)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Tiṭwān</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī (d. 1133/1721)</td>
<td>Jurist, Judge</td>
<td>Marrakech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Kīkī (d. 1185/1771)</td>
<td>Jurisconsult</td>
<td>Marrakech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muḥammad al-Daqqāq (d. d. 1158/1746)</td>
<td>Jurist</td>
<td>Rabat/Salé</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These scholars’ geographic distribution shows the Nāṣirīyya’s importance in reviving and enforcing the *sharīʿa* in rural Morocco. This reflects the focus of Ibn Nāṣir’s *Ajwība* and his and al-Khalīfa’s counsels to rural Nāṣirī communities. Many of these Nāṣirī jurists

183 Bū Jaʿd and the Sharqāwiyya zāwiya are the subject of Dale Eickelman’s study *Moroccan Islam*.
185 While al-Muʿṭī b. Šāliḥ was a student of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, he helped to established the Sharqāwiyya zāwiya as its own spiritual and scholarly center, independent of al-Khalīfa’s successors in Tamgrūt.
produced their own collections of legal responsa that continued Ibn Nāṣir’s legal tradition. Among these was Muḥammad al-Kīkī, who explicitly directed his legal opinions to the residents of Morocco’s mountainous and ungoverned territories (bilād al-sābiya). Legal responsa literature was also popular among scholars in the post-Nāṣirī Sahara.

B. Theology

Maḥammad b. Nāṣir embraced the works of the 8th/14th century Ashʿarī theologian Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī (d. 795/1393). While Ibn Nāṣir did not produce any written works in theology, his student al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī is regarded as one of the most important scholars of the Ashʿarī school during the 11th/17th century. In addition to original works, al-Yūsī produced important commentaries on al-Sanūsī’s treatises:

Figure 3.8

Theological Works by al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ajwiba fī al-Tawḥīd</em>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Taʿlīf fi Usūl al-Dīn wa Furūʿ ihi</em>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ʿAqīda Sughrā</em>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

187 See discussion in Chapter 5.
188 El Rouayheb dedicates a chapter to al-Yūsī’s contributions to Islamic theology. See El Rouayheb, *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*, 209ff.
190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
al-Yūsī’s influence was felt through Morocco and the wider Muslim World. In Chapter 4, we discuss how the Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan enabled al-Yūsī and his student Āḥmad al-Hashṭūkī, also a student of Ibn Nāṣir, to spread al-Sanūsī’s works to scholars in Egypt and the Middle East. Additionally, Chapter 5 discusses al-Hashtūkī’s role in promoting al-Sanūsī’s works in the Sahara. This occurred through his transmission of al-Yūsī’s supercommentaries and through his collaboration with the Saharan theologian Ibn al-A’mash al-Shinqīṭī.

C. Qur’ānic Psalmody (qirāʿa and tajwīd)

A final focus of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s scholarly reform involved returning Morocco to a sunnī-oriented style of Qur’anic psalmody.

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192 Ibid., 110.
193 The ḥāshiya, or supercommentary, is a genre of Islamic scholarly literature in which an author provides further explanation on top of an existing sharḥ, or commentary, of a matn, or original text. The name derives from this genre’s origin as notes written along the margins (ḥawāshi) of a commentary.
196 Ibid.: Nūḥī mentions in note 3 on this same page that al-Yūsī discusses his views of al-Sanūsī’s theological position in this work.
197 See discussion in Chapter 4.
198 See discussion in Chapter 5.
**Figure 3.9**

*Notable Nāṣirī Scholars in Qur’anic Psalmody*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ibrāhīm al-Sabā’ī (d. 1135/1723) | Nāṣiriyya zāwiya, Tamgrūt | • Student of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir  
• Served as Ahmād al-Khalīfā’s tutor in Islamic sciences, including Qur’anic psalmody  
• Performed ḥajj |
| Ahmād b. Mas’ūd al-Kansūsī (d. 1164/1751) | Nāṣiriyya zāwiya, Tamgrūt | • Student of al-Khalīfā  
• Taught Qur’anic psalmody at the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya |
| Ahmād al-Ṣawwābī (d. 1149/1737) | Sūs | • Championed *al-waṣf al-sunnī* |
| Ahmād al-Ḥābīb al-Lamṭī (d. 1165/1751) | Sijilmāsa, Tāfilālt | • Transmitted Nāṣirī style of Qur’anic recitation through students performing the overland ḥajj |
| ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Bakr al-Tanwājīwī (d. 1145/1733) | Sahara | • Sought to reform Hassānī Arab style of Qur’anic recitation in 12th/18th century |

Beginning in the 10th/16th century, Moroccan scholars began promoting a style of Qur’anic recitation known as *al-waṣf al-habīb* instituted by Muḥammad b. Abī Jum’a al-Ṣammāṭī (d. 930/1524). al-Ṣammāṭī initiated a new system of pauses (sing. *waṣf*) for

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Qur’anic reciters that demarcated meaningful phrases within the Qur’an. This was a departure from the sunnī mode of Qur’anic recitation, which followed the Prophet Muḥammad’s practice of pausing at the end of each Qur’anic verse. During the tenure of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, the revival of this recitational style, known as al-waqf al-sunnī, became a hallmark of the Nāṣirīya’s sunna-centric scholarly revival. A key play in this campaign was the noted Sūsī hadīth scholar Aḥmad al-Sawwābī. al-Ḥuḍaykī records al-Sawwābī’s treatise criticizing al-waqf al-habṭī as an “innovative recitation” that confuses and undermines Qur’anic orthography and phonetics. al-Ṣawwābī succeeded in influencing succeeding generations of Nāṣirī scholars in the Sūs to adopt al-waqf al-sunnī. al-Ḥuḍaykī also reports that while on ḥajj he found a certain Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Sjilmāsī teaching al-Ṣawwābī’s style of Qur’anic psalmody in Cairo’s al-Azhar mosque. The Nāṣirī emphasis on Qur’anic psalmody is also seen in the career of Aḥmad al-Ḥabīb al-Lamṭī, the leading Nāṣirī figure in Sijilmāsa during the mid-12th/18th century. Chapter 5 discusses how al-Lamṭī’s position along the overland ḥajj caravan route allowed him to transmit Nāṣirī recitational styles into the Sahara.

202 al-Ḥuḍaykī, Tabaqāt al-Ḥuḍaykī, v. 1, 98.
203 Ibid., v. 1, 101.
204 See Chapter 5.
Conclusion

As the Qur’anic verse quoted at the beginning of this chapter suggests, Ibn Nāṣir’s commitment to Islam’s transmitted sciences can be understood as a further manifestation of his embrace of reverent love. As elements of the light of God’s magnificence, taqwā, the faculty of hearing (samʿ) and the practice of rationation (ʿaql) are all interrelated. Hearing is the epistemological foundation of Islam’s transmitted sciences. This is especially true in the science of ḥadīth, which has always identified a text’s isnād – its interpersonal transmission through oral recitation and audition – as the foundation its authority. Furthermore, we can identify ʿaql in Ibn Nāṣir’s practice of tahqīq. His attempts to arrive at certainty through the accumulation and evaluation of transmitted texts (athār) are nearly identical to the Qur’anic description of rationation. Rather than taking Ibn Nāṣir’s scholarly tradition for granted, we argue that it is an extension of his spiritual orientation. Just as other Sufi scholars delve deeply into the world of the esoteric based on their perception of God’s light, Ibn Nāṣir’s immersion in the light of God’s magnificence helped to direct his scholarly activities. In turn, this scholarly practice stands as one of the Nāṣirīyya’s longest lasting and most impactful legacies.

Through his commitment to teaching, text production and the narration of ḥadīth texts, Muhammad b. Nāṣir succeeded in reviving the rigorous study of Islam’s transmitted sciences. This revival occurred first within the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya, where Ibn Nāṣir shaped a new generation of Moroccan scholars in his study circles. These students carried Ibn Nāṣir’s rigorous tahqīq-based scholarly approach across Morocco, North Africa, the Sahara and the Middle East. They also helped to further develop the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya’s scholarly institutions, especially its manuscript library. The development of the
Nāṣirī scholarly tradition helped to revival the critical study of ḥadīth in Morocco. It also created a new class of jurists and judges who reinforced the practice of sharīʿa within Moroccan society during the last decades of the Maraboutic Crisis and the early ʿAlawī period.

Additionally, the relationship between Nāṣirī spirituality, the revival of the sunna and the practice of ḥadīth science demands us to consider the brotherhood’s connection to the later sunnī revival of the 12th/18th century. As we discuss in the Conclusion, the extant historiography largely identifies this revival as a Middle Eastern phenomonon that spread outward to the Muslim world’s periphery through transregional mobility, especially the ḥajj pilgrimage. However, this chapter firmly establishes the Nāṣiriyya as a local ḥadīth revival movement in Morocco during the mid- to late-11th/17th century. More so, we have seen that Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa worked directly with leading Middle Eastern ḥadīth scholars Muḥammad al-Bābālī and ʿAbd Allāh b. Sālim al-Baṣrī, who are seen as early progenitors of sunnī revivalist sentiments in that region. The nature of the relationship between these scholars remain unexplored. Chapter 4 presents more evidence of the Nāṣiriyya’s success in spreading their sunna-centric religious discourse along the North African ḥajj route. The travelogues of Ibn Nāṣir’s student Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, document his efforts to revive the study of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in several rural North African communities during at least one of his ḥajj pilgrimages. While more research is needed to understand the impact of Nāṣirī discourse across this wide expanse, it is clear that Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣiriyya represent much more than a local, Moroccan Sufi movement.
Chapter 4

The Nāṣirī Ḥajj Caravan in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries

“The pilgrimage consists of months well marked so whoever takes upon himself the pilgrimage within these [months], then there should be no obscenity and no acts of renegation and no arguments in the pilgrimage. And whatever you do of good, Allah does know it and carry with you your provision of the way. Lo! The best provision of the way indeed is the reverence of Allah so revere Me O people of the heart.”
- Qur’an, 2:197.

“O you who believe! Do not violate the rights of Allah nor the sacred month nor the consecrated gifts nor the garlanded animals nor those who are aiming for the sacred house seeking the bounty from their Lord and goodly pleasure. But once you are free from the pilgrimage rituals then hunt and let not the hatred of people incite you to evil doing only because they had barred you from the sacred mosque that you transgress [against them]. And assist one another unto the piety and unto Allah’s reverence and do not assist one another unto impiety and unto transgression and revere Allah. Truly Allah is Severe in chastisement.”
- Qur’an, 3:2.

Introduction

This chapter studies the overland ḥajj’s role in the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood’s transregionalization across North Africa and the Middle East during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. The chapter begins by locating the overland ḥajj within the history of translocal mobility in Muslim Africa. It then uses Nāṣirī ḥajj diaries and other primary sources to study the social and intellectual history of the Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan. Beginning with Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s first ḥajj in 1070/1660, Nāṣirī leaders sought to facilitate the pilgrimage through the creation of Nāṣirī-specific social institutions, namely their own pilgrimage caravan and a translocal network of Nāṣirī zāwiyas and affiliated communities along the ḥajj route. Considered an extension of the community of lovers (ahl al-maḥabba), these affiliates provided Nāṣirī pilgrims with accommodation, provisions,
information about local conditions, as well as affection and familiarity. Ibn Nāṣir also formalized the bond between the overland pilgrimage and seeking knowledge. Through teaching and studying, Ibn Nāṣir and his students succeed in developing and diffusing their *ṭahqīq*-based scholarly approach and commitment to reviving the Prophetic *sunna* along the *ḥaJJ* route. Between Ibn Nāṣir’s first *ḥaJJ* in 1070/1660 and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s fourth and final *ḥaJJ* in 1121/1709-10, the Nāṣiriyya established a dense institutional and discursive legacy along the overland *ḥaJJ* route in North Africa that lasted into the 19th century.

*The History of the Overland ḤaJJ in Muslim Africa*

The overland *ḥaJJ* across Muslim Africa developed out of the common pattern of translocal mobility that bound distant and disparate Muslim societies together during the pre-modern period.\(^1\) In the wake of the Muslim conquests in the 2nd/8th century, transregional caravan networks emerged to link Muslim communities along North Africa’s Mediterranean littoral with each other and with sources of gold, salt and slaves across the Sahara.\(^2\) By the rise of the Almoravid dynasty in the 5th/11th century, these networks had stabilized and the regular movement of goods and people linked Muslim

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1 Marshall Hodgson writes, “[The Muslim world] was held together in virtue of a common Islamicate social pattern which, by enabling members of any part of the society to be accepted as members of it anywhere else, assured the circulation of ideas and manners throughout its area. Muslim always felt themselves to be citizens of the whole Dar al-Islam... Hence local cultural tendencies were continually limited and stimulated by events and ideas of an all-Muslim scope. There continued to exist a single body of interrelated traditions, developed in mutual interaction throughout Islamdom.” See *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), v. 2, 9.

communities across these regions. Scholarly travel across this space helped to consolidate Muslim Africa’s religious field. By the end of the Almohad period (mid-7th/13th century), sunnī, Mālikī discourse established itself as the foundation for transregional scholarly and commercial exchange. Lydon describes this discursive space as follows:

Muslim religious practice, which promoted the acquisition of literacy, provided structure and agency that shaped the activities of Trans-Saharan traders. Concomitantly, the application of Islamic legal codes to business behavior enhanced commercial enterprise... The practice of Islam structured both the organization of long-distance caravan trade and the operation of trade networks. Muslim merchants and traders used their Arabic literacy and access to writing paper to draw contractual agreements and dispatch commercial correspondence, while depending on their mutual trust in God.3

As transregional mobility intensified between the 2nd/8th and 6th/12th centuries, traders often found themselves accompanied by another class of itinerant voyagers: pilgrims.

3 Ghislaine Lydon, On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3. Though Lydon is specifically describing the role of Islamic discourse in supporting Trans-Saharan trade in the 19th century, her observations are applicable to as early as the 4th/10th century. Wuld ʿAbd Allah writes that it was in this period that the geographer Ibn Ḥawqal recorded the first use of written checks (ṣukūk) in Trans-Saharan commerce. See ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya fi Bilād Shinqīṭ ḥattā nihāyat al-qarn al-thānī ʿashar - (18 M.) (Rabat: Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Ṣaḥrāwīyah, 2015), 71-3. Likewise, Wuld al-Ṣālim marks the 8th/14th century as the beginning of the region’s transition from an oral to written economy. See ʿHamāh Allāh Wuld al-Ṣālim, al-Mujtamaʿ al-ahlī al-Mūriṭānī : mudun al-qawāfīl 1591-1898 (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-ʿArabīyah, 2008), 85. Loimeier summarizes these arguments in his description of the Sahara as a “connective” space united by a common discursive tradition. See Roman Loimeier, Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 12, 18-20, and Chapters 2 and 3.
Figure 4.1: Lydon’s map of the Trans-Saharan Trade in the longue durée until the 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century\textsuperscript{4}

Very little is known about the earliest \textit{hajj} pilgrimages across Muslim Africa. Historians believe that, prior to the 7\textsuperscript{th}/13\textsuperscript{th} century, pilgrims almost always traveled alone or in small, self-organized groups. The use of commercial routes gave pilgrims access to the institutions that supported overland commercial traffic. The same wells, rest stops and markets that served merchants provided pilgrims with the accommodation and provisions necessary to complete their journeys. Even after the rise of the Almoravid Empire, government support for the \textit{hajj} remained limited. However, this period witnessed the beginning of the overland pilgrimage’s transformation into a formal, collective religious practice in North Africa.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{4} Ghislaine Lydon, \textit{On Trans-Saharan Trails}, xxv.

During the Almoravid and Almohad periods, the *ḥajj* pilgrimage fell out of favor as these dynasties’ political and religious leaders focused their attention on resisting the strengthening Christian Reconquista in al-Andalus. Shortly after defeating Spanish forces at Zallāqa in 479/1086, Almoravid Sultan Yūsuf b. Tashfīn (d. 500/1106) asked the Andalusian jurist Ibn al-Rushd al-Jadd (d. 510/1126) for his opinion whether it was more virtuous to perform *ḥajj* or engage in *jihād* at a time when the balance of power in the Western Mediterranean was shifting in the favor of European Christendom. Ibn Rushd responded that the obligation of performing *ḥajj* should be nullified (*isqāt farīdat al-ḥajj*) due to increased threats from Christian kingdoms in the Mediterranean as well increased raiding by Banū Hilāl Arab pastoralists along overland caravan routes in North Africa.\(^6\) In his opinion, these circumstances negated the individual Muslim’s ability (*istiṭāʿa*) to perform *ḥajj*, a necessary condition for the pilgrimage’s obligatory status.\(^7\) His contemporary Abū Bakr al-Turṭūshī (d. 520/1126) went as a far as to deem *ḥajj* impermissible (*ḥarām*) for North African and Andalusian Muslims.\(^8\) Kuraydiyah writes that religious colleges ceased teaching the law governing the *ḥajj* pilgrimage after these *fatwas* were issued.\(^9\) While the effect of these factors on the *ḥajj*’s performance during

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\(^7\) Qur’an, 3:97.

\(^8\) Kuraydiyah, *Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ*, 30-32. This is based on a legal technicality in the Mālikī *madhhab* that prohibits the performance of an obligatory act of worship once its obligatory status has been nullified.

this period have not been studied, it is likely that such opposition and difficulty discouraged all but the most dedicated pilgrims.10

By the 7th/13th century, support for the legal prohibition of the hajj began to wane among other members of Morocco’s religious field. The Moroccan Sufi shaykh Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ (d. 631/1234) saw the restoration of the hajj pilgrimage as a religious necessity.11 Ṣāliḥ grew up in Asafī, a port city on Morocco’s Atlantic coast. As a young man, he studied in Asafī and in Fez before traveling the Middle East. There he spent two decades studying with scholars and spiritual guides in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and the Arabian Peninsula.12 After Ṣāliḥ returned to Asafī, as an accomplished scholar and spiritual guide, a community of adepts quickly formed around him. Ṣāliḥ’s biographers tell us that, not long after his return, he had a dream in which he saw that the western corner of the Ka’ba had collapsed. In the dream, Ṣāliḥ and his 23 sons worked together to restore its rightful condition.13 Ṣāliḥ understood that this dream referred to the negative effects of the prohibition of the hajj in the Islamic West. Though he was a trained jurist, Ṣāliḥ knew the spiritual value of the hajj outweighed the legal arguments prohibiting its performance. Ṣāliḥ took his dream as permission from God for him and his family to begin working to

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12 Kuraydiyah, Abū Muhammad Ṣāliḥ, 21.
13 Kuraydiyah, Abū Muhammad Ṣāliḥ, 39-40.
revive the *hajj* among their countrymen, despite continued opposition from Moroccan jurists.\(^{14}\)

Ṣāliḥ’s efforts began in Asafī. He made the *hajj* obligatory for all of his students as a means of perfecting their repentance (*tahqīq al-tawba*) before truly embarking on the spiritual path.\(^{15}\) Secondly, he organized his adepts into a cohesive group and ordered them to travel by land and not sea.\(^{16}\) While the overland route presented the threat of banditry and a scarcity of essential supplies, especially water, it also offered the possibility of coordination with local communities to give pilgrims shelter and provisions. With this in mind, Ṣāliḥ called on his adepts to travel together in a caravan on their way to *hajj*.\(^{17}\) Traveling in a dedicated caravan increased the pilgrims’ security. Armed cavalry escorted Ṣāliḥ’s caravans, which traveled slowly to keep its members together, some of whom were elderly.\(^{18}\) These caravans were also better able to negotiate safe passage with pastoral tribes. Additionally, Ṣāliḥ ordered his students to establish lodges along the *hajj* route to provide shelter to pilgrims and other travelers. Though jurists condemned their efforts, Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ’s ‘Pilgrims’ Brotherhood’ (*ṭā‘ifat al-ḥujiḥāj*) succeeded in reviving the *hajj*’s spirit and forming a network of 46 lodges that aided pilgrims from Morocco all the way to Egypt.\(^{19}\) *Ṭā‘ifat al-Ḥujiḥāj* is considered to be the first Sufi brotherhood in Moroccan history.\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) Kuraydiyah, *Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ* 49-59.
Ṣāliḥ’s dedicated pilgrimage caravan and network of Sufi lodges were the first formal institutions established to support the overland pilgrimage on the African continent. His model was adopted by the Marīnid Sultan Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb (d. 706/1307) who introduced Morocco’s first royal-sponsored pilgrimage caravan in 704/1304. This caravan benefitted from a military escort and royal patronage but still made use of Ṣāliḥ’s zāwiyā network and also employed his grandsons as caravan leaders. Royal support for the overland ḥajj continued above and below the Sahara for the next four centuries. Marīnid Fez and Sijilmāsa formed the main loci for Moroccan pilgrims, whereas Timbuktū under the Mali and Songhay Empires sponsored caravans for pilgrims in the Western Sahara and Sahel. However, Trans-Saharan and Trans-Maghribī caravan routes were too remote to earn the same level of institutional support that the Mamlūk, Ottoman and Mughal Empires provided for pilgrims in the Islamic East. The empires in the Islamic West never established garrisoned outposts to protect pilgrims, which were common along the Darb al-Ḥijāz, nor did they ever negotiate with pastoralist tribes for pilgrims’ safe passage. Rather, the responsibility for providing food, water, shelter and security for pilgrims was left to caravan leaders, local communities and individual pilgrims.

21 Kuraydiya, Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, 61.
22 Kuraydiya, Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ, 61.
23 Wuld al-Ṣālim writes that Mansa Musa’s pilgrimage in 724/1324 was the first major ḥajj by a West African Muslim ruler. This event laid the groundwork for future ḥajj caravans in the region. See Mūṭṭāniyā fi-l-Dhākirā al-ʿArabiyya, 83.
Beginning in the 10th/16th century, Muslim Africa’s overland pilgrimage system experienced a drastic realignment due to the decline of the Marīnid and Songhay empires. After ascending to Morocco’s throne, the leaders of the Sa’dī Dynasty chose their capital of Marrakech as the base of their royal ḥajj caravan, rather than the Marīnid capital of Fez. Likewise, Timbuktū no longer served as a center for overland pilgrimage traffic after its capture by the Sa’dī dynasty in 998/1590 year. The realignment of Muslim Africa’s imperial system led pilgrimage traffic to coalesce around two regional poles on the Saharan frontier. The cities of Walāta and Tīshīt became gathering points for Sahelian pilgrims, who maintained the earlier Takrūrī ḥajj route through Algeria’s Tuwāt region to Ghadāmas, Libya and through the Fezzān to Cairo. In contrast, Shinqūṭī pilgrims traveled northward to Sijilmāsa where they joined with Moroccan pilgrims on their route across the Sahara’s northern frontier and North African littoral. The Maraboutic Crisis brought new instability to this system.

26 Wuld al-Sālim, Murītāniya fī-l-Dhākira al-‘Arabīyya, 90-93.
27 Wuld al-Sālim, Murītāniya fī-l-Dhākira al-‘Arabīyya, 95-6.
The Nāṣirī Ḥajj Caravan in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries

A. Motivations for Establishing the Nāṣirī hajj Caravan

Abundant circumstantial evidence indicates the Maraboutic Crisis led to a decline in the overland hajj from Morocco during the first half of the 11th/17th century. The consequent increase in banditry and the general state of insecurity during this period appears to have discouraged the hajj pilgrimage just as it inhibited other forms of translocal mobility in Morocco. For example, al-İfrānī includes this illustrative passage in his biography of the 11th/17th century Moroccan hadith scholar Abū Yūsuf al-Sugtānī:

Among [al-Sugtānī’s] miracles… was that during his riḥla to the Middle East and his peregrination around its lands, he departed the Levant – after having resided there for a time – for Mecca the Noble. There he longed deeply for his homelands.

in Morocco and their news, for at this time his compatriots from the Maghrib were blockaded by the many conflicts between [Ahmad] al-Manšūr’s children… Furthermore, the weakness of the Sa’dī state, especially after the death of Zaydān al-Sa’dī in 1037/1627, limited its ability to support an annual hajj caravan. The riḥla narrative of Ibn Malīḥ chronicles the royal hajj caravan of Sa’dī Sultan al-Walīd b. Zaydān (d. 1045/1636) which departed Marrakech in 1040/1030. Throughout his voyage, he complains of the threat of bandits and Arab pastoralists, a sign of the caravan’s weakness. Historian Muhammad al-Manūnī argues that, eventually, the Sa’dī royal hajj caravan ceased operation altogether.

While the hajj pilgrimage from Morocco continued during the mid-11th/17th century, its performance grew irregular and increasingly perilous. The traveler Abū Sālīm al-‘Ayyāshī traveled for hajj in 1059/1649 and again in 1064/1654 and candidly expresses the tumult of uncertainty leading up to his journeys in his riḥla narrative Mā’ al-Mawā’id. As he looked to perform hajj a third time in 1069/1659, he writes that “scorpions of fitna invaded our Maghrib,” postponing al-‘Ayyāshī’s travel for three years, until 1072/1661. Once again, his hopes were dashed by a resumption of civil unrest: “The fire of hunger burned across the land, which gave rise to banditry and murder that broke apart society… bid’a spread outwardly and heresy (zandaqa) spread inwardly, people left their homes and children fled their parents…” These conditions

29 This story is recorded in al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar al-Murassa ‘a, v. 1, 363-4.
30 al-Būzaydī, Taʾrīkh Ijtīmāʾī, 91.
31 al-Būzaydī, Taʾrīkh Ijtīmāʾī, 91.
discouraged al-ʿAyyāshī from traveling. However, conditions improved, and he succeeded in departing for ḥajj in Rabīʿ II, 1072/December, 1661.35 Despite successfully performing ḥajj that year, al-ʿAyyāshī sensed the overland pilgrimage had grown vulnerable due to the instability of his times. He conveyed these feelings in an eloquent supplication (duʿā):

We ask God, by His boundless munificence and goodness, and by virtue of His Noble Prophet, to protect the emissaries to His house just as he aided his mighty Prophet, and to aid its visitors just as he aided His Messenger, and to not sever the path between us and those noble places and purified lands. For as long as we see, every year, a group that proceeds from those places of origin [i.e. the Islamic West] and arrives at those destinations [i.e. the Holy Cities], who are honored with viewing (ruʿya) the Ancient House and Sacred Mosque, and stand before its sites and perform the grand rites, and pray between his grave and minbar, may Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him, and visit his noble domicile and that of his noble Companions, then we have no doubt that the benefit (madad) [of their pilgrimages] will permeate our faith, country, body and all that is around us. And were their vision [of the Holy Cities] to be cut off – and we seek refuge in God from such – order would disintegrate, and all good among people would be lost.36

This prayer succinctly expresses al-ʿAyyāshī’s view of ḥajj’s significance within Moroccan society. Through ḥajj, Moroccan pilgrims gained the opportunity to “witness benefits for themselves” at the Holy Cities which aided in their affairs.37 When pilgrims carry these blessings with them back to their home communities, al-ʿAyyāshī believed that ḥajj had a direct impact on Morocco’s spiritual and social well-being. Without a constant flow of pilgrims, the foundations of Moroccan society would disintegrate.

Without the ḥajj, the number of witnesses to Divine reality would dwindle and access to

36 Recorded by Ahmad al-Khālīfa in al-Riḥla al-Naṣirīyya, 254-5.
37 In the quotation, we translated the Arabic word madad as “benefit” because of its appropriateness to the context. Literally, madad refers to whatever one provides to another as aid or support (Līsān al-ʿArab, m-d-d). In this context, madad refers to that which God provides pilgrims as a consequence of their performance of ḥajj.
God’s blessings would cease. In this atmosphere, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir departed on his first ḥajj pilgrimage in 1070/1660.

Ibn Nāṣir viewed ḥajj as an important spiritual exercise. His work *Manāṣik al-Haǰj*, a short treatise on the ritual law of pilgrimage, begins with discussing ḥajj’s spiritual value prior to outlining its ritual law. Ibn Nāṣir emphasizes the ḥajj’s relationship with reverence (*taqwā*), the central pillar of his religious discourse. In the opening paragraphs, he exhorts his reader to be appropriately reverent on his way to Mecca, observing silence (*ṣamt*) except when engaged in remembrance (*dhikr*), lowering their gaze, as well as contemplating (*tafakkur*) the states of the grave, the Hereafter and the amazing aspects of God’s creation. Furthermore, he advises the pilgrims to detach themselves from worldly commitments and to exhibit steadfastness (*ṣabr*) and reliance on God (*tawakkul*) during the journey. Once in Mecca, the pilgrim should perform the ḥajj rites with a heart “filled with God’s majesty and grandeur” as well as gratitude for God’s guidance to such a noble destination.⁴⁹

Ahmad Ṭabāʾī writes that Ibn Nāṣir and his companions likely traveled to ḥajj in 1070/1660 as passengers in the Sijilmāsa caravan.⁴⁰ This changed with his second ḥajj, in 1076/1665, when Ibn Nāṣir led an independent Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan from Tamgrūṭ.⁴¹ What led to this development? Ṭabāʾī argues the Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan was a natural outgrowth of the expansion of the Nāṣirī community, both in Morocco and along the pilgrimage route. Ibn Nāṣir inducted a number of adepts into the Nāṣirīyya order during

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his 1070/1660 pilgrimage. He would have been interested in visiting these adepts again, and traveling independently would have given him the best opportunity to do so. A Nāṣirī-specific hajj caravan would also have facilitated the brotherhood’s expansion along the hajj route. Thus, the establishment of an independent hajj caravan marks the beginning of the Nāṣirī community’s transregionalization. As ’Amālik writes, the Nāṣirī caravan was, in effect, a mobile zāwiya. Furthermore, there is evidence that Ibn Nāṣir may have felt a need to establish a more religiously proper and materially secure means of performing the hajj.

In his travelogue, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa relates an encounter between his father, Ibn Nāṣir, and one of the followers Muḥammad b. ’Abd al-Salām al-Asmar (d. 981/1573), whose zāwiya was located near to Tripoli, Libya. al-Khalīfa writes:

One member of [al-Asmar’s] zāwiya accompanied our shaykh, my father, may God be pleased with him and make him pleased, during his hajj in [1070]. This man used to perform psalms with a drum (daff), as was their custom. The shaykh went to him and said, “If you want to travel with us, then stop this psalmody, or else leave us alone.” The man defended his action, saying that this was the custom of his predecessors. The shaykh did not accept this and did not cease until the man stopped.

Encounters like these mattered because of Ibn Nāṣir’s position that pilgrims should maintain a state of reverence throughout the journey to Mecca. Clearly, Ibn Nāṣir identified this man’s instrumental psalmody as a violation of these principles. While his

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42 al-ʿAyyāshī writes about meeting one of these adepts, a certain Ahmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿĀṭī, in Tuzūr in Ramadan, 1072/April, 1662. See al-Rihla al-ʿAyyāshīyya, v. 2, 536.
admonishments succeeded in persuading the man to desist, as long as Ibn Nāṣir and his companions were passengers they had little say over their traveling companions’ behavior. The formation of a Nāṣirī-led caravan gave Ibn Nāṣir space to exercise his authority as a shaykh while traveling during ḥajj, thereby helping himself and his fellow Nāṣirīs to preserve their religious propriety.

The Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan also provided Ibn Nāṣir with a mobile platform for knowledge production. Seeking knowledge (al-riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm) had been part and parcel of the overland ḥajj pilgrimage as early as the 7th/13th century. As noted in the previous chapter, the ḥajj pilgrimage was an integral part of the effort of Ibn Nāṣir nd Aḥmad al-Khalīfā to revive the study of ḥadīth literature in Morocco. Through the pilgrimage, they acquired ‘high’ chains of transmission to bolster their scholarly authority. Likewise, ḥajj was the main means by which they acquired books. It was only after Aḥmad al-Khalīfā’s return from ḥajj in 1121/1710 with “a large number” of books

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46 This is evident in the works of two Moroccan scholar-pilgrims, Ibn Rushayd al-Fihrī (d. 721/1321) and Muḥammad al-ʿAbdārī (d.c. 688/1289). Unlike earlier riḥla narratives that were oriented solely towards geography, these men’s travelogues read like academic repertoires (fahāris). It is around this period as well that Ibn Khaldūn argued that al-riḥla fī ṭalab al-ʿilm was a necessary step in a scholars’ academic formation. See al-Ḥasan al-Shāhīdī, Adab al-Riḥla bi-l-Maghrib fī-l-ʿAsr al-Marīnī, 2 vols. (ʿUkāz, 1990), 78ff.

47 Yūsuf al-Kattānī writes that the first scholars to transmit Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in North Africa did so after studying and memorizing the large, multi-volume work in Mecca during their pilgrimages in the 4th/10th century. See al-Kattānī, Madrasat al-Imām al-Bukhārī fī-l-Maghrib, 30-32. For examples of the recording of ḥadīth texts and chains of transmission from the 7th/13th century see Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-ʿAbdārī, Riḥlat al-ʿAbdārī, ed. ʿAlī ʿIbrāhīm Kūrḍī (Damascus: Dār Saʾd al-Dīn, 1999), 117, 119, 216, and elsewhere. See also al-Tarḫī’s study of Ibn Rushayd’s riḥla in Fāhāris ʿUlamāʾ al-Maghrib (Tetouan, Morocco: Jamiʿat ʿAbd al-Mālik al-Saʾdī, 1999), 138-140. A similar process also occurred in West Africa. Wuld al-Sālim writes that during the 14th and 15th centuries, ḥajj allowed scholarly families in Timbuktu to disseminate chains of transmissions featuring Egyptian scholars. This period also witnessed the arrival of Mukhtasar Khalīf, also from Egypt. A classic synopsis of the Mālikī madḥhab, this text quickly integrated itself in Saharan and Sahelian teaching curricula, leading to increased uniformity in court rulings and legal opinions. See Wuld al-Sālim, Māritāniyā fī al-Dhākirah al-ʿArabīyya, 75-77.
that he began construction on the Nāṣiriyya zāwiyya’s library. Ibn Nāṣir also made teaching and studying an explicit focus of his pilgrimage journeys. Ibn Nāṣir’s biographers note that travel did not interrupt the worship and teaching routines he set at the Nāṣiriyya zāwiyya.48

While earlier Moroccan scholars traveled with students locally, Ibn Nāṣir was the first to do so during hajj.49 He formalized the relationship between the hajj and seeking knowledge through the institution of study circles for the Nāṣirī caravan’s members. Though we only have sparse details regarding the curriculum Ibn Nāṣir followed, it’s clear these classes were serious. Ḥusayn b. Nāṣir notes that he studied all of Mukhtasār Khalīl with Ibn Nāṣir, once during his hajj in 1070/1660 and twice in 1077/1666. He notes that both years, these studies took place on the return route between Egypt and Biskra, Algeria.50 Aḥmad al-Khalīfa continued these practices. In 1096/1685, Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī encountered al-Khalīfa’s caravan encamped on a river bank between Sijilmāsa and Figīg. He writes of finding the shaykh and his companions “studying” next to a large pile of firewood, presumably to be used to extend their study circle into the night.51

Ibn Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s successful revival of the scholarly hajj pilgrimage resulted in an increase in the number of scholarly travelogues published after Ibn Nāṣir’s first hajj in 1070/1660. After returning from his third hajj in 1072/1662, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī composed Māʾ al-Mawāʾid. An instant classic, al-ʿAyyāshī’s work set the standard for Moroccan rihla literature for the next century and a half. Māʾ al-
Mawāʿid was especially influential among the Nāṣirīyya, many of whom produced their own riḥla narratives. The Nāṣirī scholars’ participation in this genre demonstrates the close link between seeking knowledge and the brotherhood’s practice of hajj. Additionally, these sources, as well as the fahāris literature, provide a detailed picture of how Nāṣirī scholars engaged with their peers during the hajj and how they succeeded in diffusing their texts, discourse and intellectual practices along the pilgrimage route.

With these considerations in mind, it’s easy to understand Ibn Nāṣir’s motivations for establishing the Nāṣirī hajj caravan. By the time he departed for Mecca in 1070/1660, he had served as the Nāṣirīyya ṣawīya’s leader for nearly 15 years. During that period, his lodge had grown into a spiritual and scholarly center whose influence was beginning to spread across Morocco. Additionally, Ibn Nāṣir and his students dedicated themselves to propagating a reformist religious discourse aimed at cultivating reverence in their hearts and throughout Moroccan society. The Nāṣirī hajj caravan served to further integrate the brotherhood’s community and discourse, while elevating their status and authority, and earning them the spiritual and social resources they believed to be necessary for their salvation and their reformist mission’s success.

B. A Journey of Love

The Nāṣirī hajj caravan was grounded in the principles of reverant love that defined the brotherhood’s spiritual discourse. In his Ajwība, Ibn Nāṣir links hajj with the

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practice of visiting pious people \( (\text{ziyāra}) \). Ibn Nāṣir considered love to be the best motive for \( \text{ziyāra} \), which is also the best type of travel. He elaborates on this a few lines later:

As for \( \text{ziyāra} \), it has no requirements nor any limitation. Rather, \( \text{ziyāra} \) is permitted at any time, [while on] either \( \text{wudū’ or tayammum} \), though being on \( \text{wudū’} \) is best. It was the custom of our former \( \text{shuyūkh} \) to visit those whose example should be followed every Monday, Thursday and Friday… Or twice a year, in the Fall and also in the Summer, if there was a distance between them…

If someone engages in commerce or takes care of other needs while traveling to perform \( \text{ziyāra} \), their visit is not harmed nor is its reward reduced, as long as \( \text{ziyāra} \) is the main motive of their travel. If this is not the case, then they should not leave for that need. It was for this reason, according to Ibn `Abbās, that God revealed His words, “There is no blame on you to seek a bounty from your Lord.” (Baqara, 2:198). [This verse] refers to whatever commerce people may be required to engage in while traveling to \( \text{hajj} \). Furthermore, there is nothing wrong with visiting a number of God’s allies (\( \text{awliyā’} \)) in one trip. Rather, the reward is multiplied. A traveler’s visit (\( \text{ziyāra} \)) to fulfill a worldly need is rewarded as such. The intention to perform [proper] \( \text{ziyāra} \) while still at home is better than that, so that each of their steps earns a share of that journey’s reward…

While Ibn Nāṣir treats \( \text{hajj} \) and \( \text{ziyāra} \) as distinct practices, it is clear that he views them as interrelated. This position was held by Moroccan pilgrims as far back as Abū Muḥammad Šāliḥ who described visiting the Prophet Muḥammad (\( \text{ziyārat rasūl Allāh} \)) in Medina as an extension of the \( \text{hajj} \) pilgrimage in Mecca. Later, Ibn Nāṣir affirms his view of the overland \( \text{hajj} \) as a means to emulate the Prophet Muḥammad, a further expression of love for God’s messenger. al-Ṣanhājī records his exchange on this topic:

When [Ibn Nāṣir] intended to travel to perform the \( \text{hajj} \) and visit the tomb of the Prophet, peace be upon him, I asked him, “Is an ally of God (\( \text{wali} \)) able to walk from here to Mecca and return from there in an hour, or no?” He said, may God be pleased with him, “They do that.” So I said to him, “O \( \text{sayyid} \), how can they be capable of doing so and then travel to \( \text{hajj} \) by camel and donkey?” He responded, may God be pleased with him, “Doing so is not part of the \( \text{sunna} \). Rather, the \( \text{sunna} \) is to travel to make pilgrimage to God’s Sacred House just as God’s Messenger did, so that they suffer from hunger, thirst and the difficulty of the way just as God’s Messenger suffered, peace be upon him.\[55\]

55 al-Darʿī and al-Ṣanhājī, \textit{al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣirīyy}, 194
Performing the overland ḥajj is, then, a component of the Nāṣiriyya’s broader expression of love of God and the Prophet Muḥammad. Nāṣirī travelogues affirm love’s role in motivating Nāṣirī pilgrims to travel for the ḥajj and ziyāra. Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāšī opens his riḥla narrative by expressing how he had longed (ishṭiyāq) to visit the Holy Cities since he entered adulthood. Aḥmad al-Khalīfa borrows al-ʿAyyāshī’s language when he writes that, in 1119/1707, he longed to “adorn [my eyes] with the vision of the Holy Cities and their sights.”

It was on this basis that Nāṣirī pilgrims avidly visited the graves of pious people during their ḥajj pilgrimages. The most important ziyāra sites for them were the tombs of Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī outside of Sijilmāsa and the tomb of Aḥmad Zarrūq outside of Miṣrāta, Libya. These visits demonstrate the love the Nāṣiriyya held for their predecessors in the Zarrūqī Sufi lineage. Writing during his nine day stay in Sijilmāsa in 1096/1685, Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī writes that he “requested a number of matters at [Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī’s] tomb, all of which were taken care of, praise be to God.” Aḥmad al-Khalīfa writes more about his visit to al-Ghāzī’s tomb during his ḥajj in 1121/1709:

…We set out for the camels’ kneeling place, the seekers’ shelter, the one whom no friend can equal or parallel, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ghāzī. We went to his tomb — what a tomb! — welcoming and wide. We visited with our companions and those people of our love who were with us. I entrusted him with my hidden thoughts and well-guarded concerns. We never doubted that our desire would be fulfilled and our aim achieved. As we got up [to depart] we formed an intention to return to him...

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56 al-ʿAyyāshī, al-Riḥla al-ʿAyyāšiyya, v. 1, 51
57 al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, 82.
al-Khalīfa’s words reveal the bond of sincere, intimate affection he shared with al-Ghāzī. He considered him more dear than any of his living companions, and someone with whom he could share his deepest joys and concerns. This was based on his trust in al-Ghāzī’s own intimate relationship with God. This love and fidelity also permeated al-Khalīfa’s interactions with al-Ghāzī’s descendants and followers:

We stayed for eight days enjoying the hospitality of imam al-Ghāzī. We visited his noble station at the beginning and end of the day and also in the night. The people [around him] strove greatly to take care of our needs. The resident devotees (murābitūn), people of love and brothers were extremely generous with what they gave to please each of us. They generously fed the pilgrims (hujjāj) to the mother of the cities (umm al-qurā) [i.e. Mecca]. They did all that was asked of them and provided all that was requested of them: food and drink, fodder for [our] animals and otherwise. [All of this] despite the state of drought in their area, and the subsequent rise in prices that causes the soul to shudder.\(^\text{60}\)

In this case, the mutual love between al-Khalīfa, his fellow pilgrims, and al-Ghāzī’s community facilitated their access to material and social resources.

al-Khalīfa employs similar language when describing his visit to Aḥmad Zarrūq’s tomb, located outside of Miṣrāta, Libya:

We and a group of our companions turned to visit the verifying shaykh, the outstanding, precise scholar; the knower of and guide to God; the master of both knowledges, who realized both visions; the repository of the two paths (al-madhhabayn), who is accepted by both parties; the exemplar of the people of inner knowledge and the guide for the people of exoteric [knowledge]; the font of secrets in all outward forms; the axial saint of our Maghrib, the imam of our imams: our Master Abū al-Abbās Aḥmad b. Aḥmad Zarrūq al-Burnusī al-Fāṣī. May God realize our affiliation with him and purify our conscience for his love, amen.\(^\text{61}\)

al-Khalīfa’s words express a more formal, less familiar relationship with Zarrūq than what we saw with al-Ghāzī. Zarrūq is portrayed more as a scholarly and spiritual

\(^{60}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya, 99-100.

\(^{61}\) al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya, 217.
authority than an intimate friend. Nonetheless, al-Khalīfa’s words affirm his love and admiration for Zarrūq. al-Khalīfa also testifies to the potency of Zarrūq’s blessing (baraka) which was an aid to pilgrims who frequently visited his tomb on their way to hajj:

It is commonly understood by pilgrims and those who visit [Zarrūq’s] grave that if they deposit their souls and property with God in [Zarrūq’s] presence, then nothing bad will happen to them [for the duration of their journey]. People do this when they pass by him on land or if they go by him at sea, and they find his baraka. There is no innovation (bid‘a) or anything strange about this. Indeed, God is a preserver (ḥafīẓ) whose deposits are not lost. Likewise, God’s allies (al-awliyā’ ) are His doors. So if someone deposits something with God at one of His doors, then how could He not preserve it there?\textsuperscript{62}

The Nāsirīyya’s custom of visiting al-Ghāzī and Zarrūq reveals their sense of belonging within the wider Zarrūqī spiritual community. Though separated by centuries and distance, these shaykhs remained vital emotional and spiritual resources for Aḥmad al-Khalīfa and others. Ziyāra also defined the role of the Nāṣīrī community of love – the ahl al-maḥabba – along the hajj route.

The success of the Nāṣīrī hajj caravan depended on its access to the material, spiritual and emotional resources that its members required. In order to acquire provisions, shelter and information on travel conditions, the Nāṣīrī caravan’s leadership actively collaborated with local actors. As with al-Ghāzī’s community, bonds of love gave the Nāṣirīyya privileged access to these resources, even during times of scarcity. The expansion of the Nāṣīrī ahl al-maḥabba served to extend this type of access along much of the hajj route. The services that the ahl al-maḥabba provided Nāṣīrī pilgrims overlapped with those provided by more general, public institutions that served overland

\textsuperscript{62} al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nasiriyya, 220.
pilgrims. However, the *ahl al-maḥabba*’s affection and familiarity were highly valued by Nāṣirī pilgrims who were many months and many hundreds of miles from their homes. We see this in al-Khaṭīfa’s interactions with members of the *ahl al-maḥabba* as recorded in his travelogue.

On his return from *ḥajj* in 1122/1710, he writes about his relief when meeting a large contingent of Nāṣirī adepts in Tājurā’, outside of Tripoli, Libya:

> [Upon our arrival] the *mufti* sīdi Muḥammad al-Makanī sent us some barley, straw for our animals and some watermelons, may God accept from him. [At this], the members of our caravan began to feel at rest. They settled into residences where they cast away their walking sticks for the sweetness of standing still. However, this joy was tainted by our distance and separation from the Holy Cities along with the bitter taste of the distances [we had traversed] through the Barqa desert. O our longing for the Holy Cities! O our longing! We ask God the Most High to return us there again and time after time. [Yet], we gathered with our lovers and removed our deep-set loneliness. We packed our bags with the loving union provided by our intimate associates and our eyes found relief from all afflictions. [Our hosts] were pleased to be wrapped in the cloaks of loving union which shred apart the void of our separation.

We find another vivid display of love and fidelity when al-Khaṭīfa visits Abū Turkiya, an elderly, ecstatic Sufi living near to Tripoli who knew Maḥammad b. Nāṣir:

> As we approached [Abū Turkiya’s] house during our *ḥajj* in 1096/1685, he came out to meet us, swaying, carried between two men, his feet dragging on the ground. We dismounted and greeted him with an embrace. He said to me, “You are sayyidī Ahmad b. Maḥammad b. Nāṣir.” He repeated that many times, and then after speaking for some time he began to repeat it again and again. Every time he said that to me, I responded, “Yes, sayyidī.” He embraced me and said, “Welcome! Welcome!” A great joy and happiness came over him, the likes of which I did not encounter from anyone else whom we passed by in the countryside or city. Throughout all of this he kept saying, “Praise and thanks be to God, this is a day of celebration!” He did his utmost to pray for us. He took me by the hand and led me to a *maṣjid* by the door of his house, which he had built. He sat with us [there] and called for food to be brought. He presented [us] with bread and exquisite grapes that satisfied those who were present. We walked together for about a mile, which was amazing considering [that previously] he could not

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walk on his own. Yet, when we walked together, he was able to do so. God knows best, but this was only due to the love that flowed through him.

He then came to us between sunset and the beginning of Maghrib prayer when we were back with our caravan. Before him was a man carrying a large platter, while he rode a donkey that was led by another man. We stood to greet him and he said, “This is what you will break your fast with”, speaking to me, “[I noticed] you were fasting and did not eat with everyone else at my home.” The platter was set on the ground. It contained a stew (tharīḍ), meat and a large bunch of the most delectable, delicious grapes. [Abu Turkiya] said to me, “Eat! And order your companions to eat!” So we and our companions sat and we began to eat. As we ate he called to us, “Eat! Whoever eats this food of mine will find blessing, God willing.” Someone [among us] who claimed to love my father, the shaykh, may God be pleased with him, said: “O sayyidī! Pray for me, for indeed I loved sayyidī Mahammad b. Nāṣir.” [Abū Turkiya] looked at him and said, “It is difficult to love the ashyākh, few are able to do it.” [At that, the man] turned away from him. We considered this to be one of [Abū Turkiya’s] miracles.

These anecdotes illustrate the benefits that extended to both sides of the ahl al-maḥabba network. For Nāṣirī pilgrims, contact with their brethren gave them comfort in the midst of an otherwise arduous journey. Hospitality from the ahl al-maḥabba formed a reliable source of food, shelter and good company. The familiar presence offered by communities who embraced the Nāṣirīyya’s commitment to reverent love also offered a respite from the ḥajj’s spiritual challenges. For members of the ahl al-maḥabba, hosting the Nāṣirī caravan gave them the opportunity to reunite with their beloved brothers, sisters and teachers. In this way, the benefit of these meetings was shared by all.

C. Preparations for Departure

The Nāṣirī ḥajj caravan took seven to eight months to complete its journey from Tamgrūṭ to Mecca. Preparation for its departure began in Muḥarram, the first month of

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64 al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 231-2.
the Islamic calendar and 11 months prior to ḥajj season. At this time, the Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh dispatched letters inviting adepts and members of the local community to join the brotherhood for the upcoming pilgrimage journey.\textsuperscript{65} He also called for the zāwiya’s pack animals to be brought in from pasture and made ready for the caravan’s use.\textsuperscript{66} Nāṣirī pilgrims began gathering in Tamgrūt by early Rabī’ II, the fourth month of the Islamic calendar. This gave them time to prepare for the Nāṣirī caravan’s departure, usually at the end of the same month or at the beginning of the following month, Jumādā I.

By the middle of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s tenure, the Nāṣiriyya’s networks extended throughout Morocco and deep into the Western Sahara corridor. Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī writes that, in 1096/1685, he received an invitation from Aḥmad al-Khalīfa to perform the ḥajj while serving as the qāḍī in the Saharan salt-mining town of Taḡḥāza.\textsuperscript{67} He writes that, on this pilgrimage, al-Khalīfa’s caravan consisted of Nāṣirī adepts from across Southeastern Morocco: the Darʿa Valley, Ghrīs, al-Bīja, Tadghart, and Dādas, together with a group of shurafa’ who joined him in Sijilmāsa.\textsuperscript{68} al-Hashtūkī made a second ḥajj with al-Khalīfa in 1119/1707.\textsuperscript{69} Upon arriving at the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya in Rabī’ II, he reports meeting “thousands” of Nāṣirī “students and adepts (fuqarā’).”\textsuperscript{70} He writes that many of them came from cities along Morocco’s Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts, like Azammūr, Sale and Tiṭwān, or from the Middle Atlas region.\textsuperscript{71} A separate

\textsuperscript{65} al-Darʿī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya}, 86.
\textsuperscript{66} al-Darʿī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya}, 86.
\textsuperscript{69} Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām” (n.d.), q̣-147, Bibliothèque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (BNRM). That year, al-Khalīfa was delayed by Mawlay Ismāʿīl, and finally performed ḥajj two years later in 1121/1709.
\textsuperscript{70} al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām”, folio 41.
\textsuperscript{71} al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām”, folio 41.
contingent of pilgrims from the Sūs arrived later.\textsuperscript{72} al-Hashtūkī also mentions a group of Nāṣirī adepts and scholars from Marrakech who came to Tamgrūt to give their farewell blessings to the Nāṣirī pilgrims and to request their prayers.\textsuperscript{73}

al-Hashtūkī’s observations illustrate how the Nāṣirī \emph{hajj} caravan performed an important integrative function for the brotherhood. Gathering in Tamgrūt for the \emph{hajj} caravan’s departure gave its distant members an opportunity to come together to bond, worship and exchange ideas. While waiting to depart Tamgrūt in 1119/1707, al-Hashtūkī writes about meeting and studying with the renowned mathematician Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī. During this time, al-Hashtūkī was able to study five of al-Rasmūkī’s works and get his \emph{ijāza}.\textsuperscript{74} Similarly, with the establishment of their pilgrim caravan, the Nāsiriyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt became a new node in Northwest Africa’s regional \emph{hajj} network. Prior to Ibn Nāṣir’s first \emph{hajj} in 1070/1660, pilgrims from Darʿa would travel to Sijilmāsa to join the annual \emph{hajj} caravan from Fez.\textsuperscript{75} It was also around this time that pilgrims from Shinqīt in the Western Sahara began traveling northwards to Sijilmāsa to perform \emph{hajj}. It appears that Tamgrūt’s location along the \emph{tariq al-lamtūnī} that connected Southern Morocco to the Sahel made it a convenient destination for pilgrims from this region.\textsuperscript{76} In this way, the \emph{hajj} caravan brought together geographically disparate Nāṣirī members to share a profound spiritual, social and cultural experience.

Unlike earlier royal-sponsored \emph{hajj} caravans, the Nāṣirī caravan was self-organized. The brotherhood’s \emph{shaykh} served as the caravan’s leader (\emph{amīr}). In the years

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{72} al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām”, folio 41-2.
  \item \textsuperscript{73} al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām”, folio 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{74} al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām”, folio 41.
  \item \textsuperscript{75} Amālik, \emph{Jawānīb}, v. 1, 163.
  \item \textsuperscript{76} See further discussion in Chapter 5.
\end{itemize}
when he did not travel with the pilgrims, his appointed representative served as their leader. In addition to the amīr, a scholar served as the caravan’s judge and served on a consultative shūrā council along with two representatives from each tribe participating in the Nāṣirī caravan. While the Nāṣirī amīr had a decisive voice, he did not act alone nor did his authority override the shūrā council’s disagreement. The Nāṣirī pilgrims’ independence from government involvement stands in stark contrast to contemporary efforts by the Ottoman Empire to sponsor and regulate the ḥajj. Unlike the Ottomans, Morocco’s Sultans never invested in an infrastructure to support the pilgrimage nor took responsibility for their pilgrims’ safety beyond providing the royal hajj caravan with a military escort. However, the Nāṣirīyya’s ability to mobilize a translocal network of adepts and organize them into a hajj caravan that provided its own provisions and armed protection did not go unnoticed by Morocco’s ʿAlawite sultans.

Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya begins with his account of his unsuccessful attempt to perform hajj in 1119/1707. After arriving in Sijilmāsa with the Nāṣirī caravan, al-Khalīfa received a message from Sultan Mawlay Ismāʿīl requesting his presence in the ʿAlawī capital of Meknes for the Sultan to bid him farewell on his journey. al-Khalīfa expresses his surprise at the Sultan’s request and, after consulting

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77 Upon arriving in Sijilmāsa in 1119/1707, Aḥmad al-Khalīfa was recalled by Moroccan Sultan Mawlay Ismāʿīl to Meknes. al-Khalīfa returned to Sijilmāsa one and a half months later and decided to return to Tamgrūt. A contingent of Nāṣirī pilgrims who had traveled to Sijilmāsa from Tamgrūt decided to continue on their hajj, so al-Khalīfa appointed a certain Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Sugtānī as their amīr. See al-Hashtūṭī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Harām”, folios 51-2.
78 For example, see the decision-making process between al-Khalīfa and the shūrā council with regards to the caravan’s route through the Libyan desert on their return from hajj. See al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 643-4.
79 Faroqhi writes that for the Ottoman Sultans, the safe return of hajj pilgrims was a “political liability.” This was a factor in their care for the pilgrimage route. See Sultans and Pilgrims, 8.
with his companions and praying on the matter, he departed Sijilmāsa and its “clouds of rumors” with a small party of associates. After seven days of travel, they arrived in Meknes where they were provided accommodations at the tomb of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Majdhūb within the walls Mawlay Ismā‘īl’s sprawling palace complex. al-Khalīfa describes his internment as follows:

We sat for days without seeing [the Sultan] and without him seeing us. All the while his messengers came to us repeatedly to suggest that we refrain from traveling this year for reasons imagined by the Sultan and which they claimed we should feel obliged to comply with. I firmly refused to turn back, as I did not feel obliged to do so. Then, one of [the Sultan’s] state advisors came to me to say that [the Sultan] was coming to see us. We went out to meet him in the mosque’s courtyard. There we spoke politely and affectionately and he mentioned that our refraining from travel this year would help reassure the country due to the fear that had overcome the general populace. He claimed that they would feel at peace if we remained [by their side]. I acquiesced to his request. We then said our farewells and left his presence to head [back] to our companions in Sijilmāsa.

Back in Sijilmāsa, al-Khalīfa informed the Nāṣirī pilgrims of his decision. He directed them to continue on their way to hajj. Then, he returned to Tamgrūt. al-Khalīfa describes this episode as a severe tribulation that was only relieved through his surrender to God’s decree. However, this did not put an end to Mawlay Ismā‘īl’s interference with the Nāṣirī hajj caravan.

al-Khalīfa writes that the following year, 1120/1708, he received a letter from Mawlay Isma‘īl stating, “If you have decided to travel to the Holy Cities [this year], you must discuss this matter with my son who is on his way to you to serve as a governor.

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80 al-Dar‘ī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya, 82.
83 This appears to have been Mawlay al-Sharīf b. Ismā‘īl (d. 1139/1726), however it is unclear. al-Būzaydī writes that Mawlay al-Sharīf served as Dar‘a’s governor until 1114/1702 and then returned as governor in 1124/1712. The timing of Mawlay Ismā‘īl’s letter as described in al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya would fall between these dates. See al-Būzaydī, Ta‘rikh Ijtimā‘ī, 112-4.
Whatever you both decide, let us know, and that will be good.” Once Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s son arrived, he told al-Khalīfa that his father had directly ordered him to keep al-Khalīfa from performing hajj. The Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh describes the Sultan’s justifications for his detention as, “imagined reasons… rather they are selfish excuses and satanic inspirations.”

al-Khalīfa does not state whether he accepted the Sultan’s demands. Rather, he writes that the presence of Mawlay Ismaʿīl’s son demoralized his companions and made travel impossible that year.

What were the conditions surrounding al-Khalīfa’s detention from performing pilgrimage in 1119/1707 and 1120/1708? al-Khalīfa provides little information, preferring to remain tactfully tacit about the accusations he faced from Mawlay Ismāʿīl. Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī gives more details about this situation. He attributes Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s intervention to two erroneous accusations. The first was that al-Khalīfa was seeking to take over leadership of all Moroccan pilgrims. He writes that Mawlay Ismāʿīl asked al-Khalīfa to travel to hajj as part of the Fez caravan rather than independently.

Additionally, al-Hashtūkī states that Mawlay Ismāʿīl was concerned about al-Khalīfa’s relationship with Maway Ismāʿīl’s son, Abū Naṣr (d. 1139/1727), who launched a rebellion in Wādī Darʿa in 1114/1702. During the uprising, al-Khalīfa had given sanctuary to Abū Naṣr when he fled his brother ʿAbd al-Malik (d. 1141/1728), who came to Darʿa with an army to put an end to Abū Naṣr’s uprising. al-Khalīfa eventually negotiated Abū Naṣr’s safe passage out of Darʿa to the Sahara. al-Hashtūkī fervently denies that al-Khalīfa’s actions signaled his opposition to Mawlay Ismāʿīl. Rather, he

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84 al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, 85.
86 For an account of this event, see al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar, v. 1, 180-1.
writes that providing refuge for Abū Naṣr and mediating between him and Mawlay ʿAbd al-Malik reflected al-Khalīfa’s commitment to providing hospitality for those in need and to intervene to defusse conflicts in society.  

ʿAmālik writes that we can understand al-Khalīfa’s detention within the pattern of increasing pressure on the Nāṣirīyya by the Sultanic administration (makhzan) in the early 12th/late 17th century. ʿAmālik writes that al-Khalīfa’s departure for ḥajj in 1119/1707 occurred during a period of acute tension between Mawlay Ismāʿīl and Morocco’s religious elites. The year before, 1118/1706, saw the bloody conclusion of Muḥammad al-ʿĀlim’s revolt in the Sūs. One of Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s sons, Muḥammad al-ʿĀlim, enjoyed the sympathy of many Moroccan religious scholars due to his piety and support of religious knowledge. Many of these scholars were affiliated with the Nāṣirīyya. Additionally, the year 1120/1708 saw the renewal of Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s inquisition of Morocco’s religious scholars to secure their support for his slave army, the ʿabīd al-Bukhārī. Muḥammad al-ʿĀlim had opposed this policy, and Nāṣirī support for his movement suggests that al-Khalīfa was also opposed to it. Regardless of its causes, ʿAmālik writes that Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s intervention against the Nāṣirī hajj caravan was an isolated incident. Indeed, al-Khalīfa writes that, by 1121/1710, the “winds of mercy stirred unexpectedly” and opened the way for him to depart on ḥajj.

D. Ahmad al-Khalīfa’s Ḥajj Journey in 1121/1710

89 ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 2, 479.
90 al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiṣṣāʾ, v. 7, 94ff.
The Nāṣirihāj caravan followed the established overland pilgrimage route used by North African pilgrims and merchants which cut across the Northern Sahara and Mediterranean littoral on its way to Egypt and the Ḥijāz. This route was divided into three principal sections. The ‘western portion’ stretched from Dar’a valley to Tripoli, Libya. A middle portion took the journey through the Barqa desert to Cairo, Egypt. And the last portion of the journey comprised travel on the darb al-Hijāz, the formal ḥajj route between Cairo and Mecca. In 1121/1709, al-Khalīfa’s journey to Mecca took six months and seven days. He then completed his return to Tamgrūt in eight months and ten days. In total, he and his companions traveled over 7000 miles overland, spending nearly a year and half away from their homes, families and loved ones.

Fig. 4.3

_The Major Stages of the Overland Ḥajj for Nāṣirī Pilgrims_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage (marḥala)</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dar’a to Sijilmāsa</td>
<td>4-6 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sijilmāsa to Fīgīg</td>
<td>9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fīgīg to Abū Samghūn</td>
<td>4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Samghūn to ‘Ayn Māḍī</td>
<td>8 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ayn Māḍī to al-Aghwāṭ</td>
<td>9 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Aghwāṭ to Sīdī Khālid</td>
<td>6-7 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

93 al-Darʿī, _al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya_, 738.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sīdī Khālid to Biskra</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biskra to Tūzar</td>
<td>8 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tūzar to Qābis</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qābis to Tripoli</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripoli to Cairo</td>
<td>40 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo to Mecca</td>
<td>36 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecca to Medina (after performing <em>hajj</em> rites)</td>
<td>10 days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.4:** A map of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s *hajj* from 1121-2/1709-1710. The red line marks his route to Mecca, and the blue line marks his return route to Morocco. Prominent stopping points are shown with red markers.\(^95\)

The caravan’s first destination was Sijilmāsa, an important preliminary stopping point where all Moroccan pilgrims gathered before departing on the *hajj* route. al-Khalīfa

\(^{95}\) Map produced by author using data from al-Khalīfa’s *al-Rihla al-Nāširiyya*. 
writes that, in 1121/1709, his caravan spent eight days in the city, resting, purchasing supplies and enjoying the hospitality of fellow Nāṣirīs in the area. Sijilmāsa was home to a large and prominent Nāṣirī community as well as the aforementioned tomb of Abū l-Qāsim al-Ghāzi. The caravan also continued to add members at this early stage of its journey.

Responsible for their own provisions and protection, Nāṣirī pilgrims took advantage of the Sijilmāsa’s markets to purchase the supplies they needed for the start of their overland journey. Lists provided by al-Hashtūkī and Abū Sālim al-‘Ayyāshī advise fellow travelers how to purchase their own mounts, food, clothing and other sundries. Pilgrims traveled on camels, mules or horses, which were rented or bought and sold at different stages of the hajj journey. For food, al-Hashtūkī advised a blend of barley meal (sawīq), fermented butter (samn), black pepper and dates, which was to be kneaded together and rolled into balls. Not only portable, al-Hashtūkī writes this mixture kept well and that one ball kept a traveler full all day. Both authors also advise pilgrims to travel with a small collection of luxury goods to be sold or traded for provisions or services during the journey. These types of goods were referred to as al-‘iṭriyya (lit., perfumes) and included saffron, gold dust and pieces of red Moroccan leather. Parchment, pens,
ink, writing boards and books were also included as essential accessories for literate travelers. Lastly, both authors advised fellow pilgrims to travel with a musket and ammunition for self-defense.

Lists like these emphasize economy and discourage pilgrims from packing too much for their journeys. As the late 12th/18th century Nāṣīrī pilgrim, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣīrī, wrote, “be aware that the way is long for the traveler, and even the lightest and most essential items can become heavy.” These texts also recommend traveling with a companion or servant. al-Hashtūkī first advises against traveling with a friend or relative and expecting them to provide voluntary service: “the road is difficult and [brings out] what is held inside people and their hearts, and it reveals people’s hidden faults.” Rather, he recommends purchasing a slave for the ḥajj journey. He emphasizes that, unlike free servants or friends, slaves cannot refuse their master’s requests. This goes far to assure cooperation even during difficult portions of the journey.

al-Hashtūkī’s reference to servants and slaves indicates the Nāṣīrī caravan’s socioeconomic diversity. Scholars like al-Hashtūkī traveled with other elites (aʿyān), like the caravan’s amīr and the shuraftā’, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad. Inhabiting the same space, but different social circles, were ordinary pilgrims and then poor pilgrims, who are


103 al-Hashtūkī, “al-Riḥla ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥārām”, folios 93-4. It was common for literate pilgrims to travel with books and writing materials. In 1121/1709-10, al-Khalīfa mentions spending 15 gold pieces (mithqāl) on a tent for his personal library, which accompanied him on ḥajj.


referred to as the ṣaʿālīk. Slaves and servants formed a class of their own. The relationship between these groups is unclear. Charity was ever present during the hajj, though individuals were held responsible for their own care. Traveling together created a sense of cohesion, though hajj diaries report different elements of the caravan traveling separately, often at their own risk. For example, al-Hashtūkī writes that in 1096/1685 a pair of Arabs from Tuwāt encountered his caravan between Taghāza and Wādi Dar’ā. They had fled Taghāza and had no provision or mounts. The caravan initially told them to return to Taghāza because caring for them represented a liability for its members. However, they decided to allow them to stay and share mounts with them. After a few days, this agreement fell apart after the two men abused the caravan’s hospitality. al-Hashtūkī writes that the caravan then expelled the men and left them behind at one of their stopping points in the desert.

In between Sijilmāsa and the next major stop, Figīg, the caravan passed through the Saharan villages of al-Qanādsa and Bashār, both home to Naṣirī communities. Figīg was another important trading center on the Northwestern Saharan frontier. For several generations, the local qāṭir was a Naṣirī and the city was home to a substantial Naṣirī community. On departing Figīg, the caravan entered the Algerian Sahara on its way to Biskra, passing through several important villages along the way: Abū Samghūn,

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108 ʿAmālik, Jawānib, v. 1, 195.
109 Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī relates that on his return journey from hajj, a group of his caravan’s ṣaʿālīk were attacked by bandits after lagging behind the caravan. See al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya al-Kubrā, v. 2, 887.
111 al-Qanādsa is home to the Zayyānīyya zāwiyya founded by Muḥammad b. Abī Zayān al-Qandūsī.
112 al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya, 125-7
113 See Appendix.
ʿAyn al-Māḍī, al-Aghwāṭ and Sīdī Khālid. Biskra was the first major city the Nāṣiriyā encounterd after Fīqīg. The caravan only passed by there in 1121/1709 but Aḥmad al-Khalīfa relates his notes from a visit there in 1096/1685 and those of al-ʿAyyāshī who passed through there on his pilgrimage in 1059/1649. Both authors praise the city for its material wealth and urban development but lament the lack of scholarly culture. al-Khalīfa mentions the absence of real teachers, fuqahāʾ and Qurʾān reciters, which al-ʿAyyāshī attributes to the city’s abuse at the hands of Algeria’s Ottoman rulers. These observations reveal recurrent themes in Nāṣirī pilgrimage diaries. The first is a keen interest in documenting cultural and intellectual life along the hajj route. The second is a disdain for the “Turks” who exemplified oppression and wrongdoing (zulm) along the pilgrimage route. After Biskra, the caravan stopped in Sīdī ῦUqba, a small village known as the burial place of the Muslim general ῦUqba b. Nāfiʿ (d. 63/683), who played an integral role in the Muslim conquest of North Africa in the 1st/7th century. This area was home to the Sīdī Nājī clan who were affiliated with the Nāṣiriyā and operated a school modeled on the Nāṣiriyā zāwiya in Tamgrūt. From there the caravan continued on its way, stopping briefly in several villages before arriving in Tūzar.

Tūzar marked the Nāṣiriyā’s entry into Tunisia. Here, in 1121/1709, al-Khalīfa reports that the caravan hired a guide to take them across the salt flats of the Jarīd. He also reports the caravan had to pay protection money (ītāwa) to the local rulers. He notes

115 Ibid., 139.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid., 140.
118 See Appendix.
119 al-Khalīfa records his name and his salary, which was one riyāl. See al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyā, 159.
this was the custom (*sunna*) of the territory, whose residents suffered from unjust Turkish rule, banditry and over-taxation. al-Khalîfa writes:

Tûzar is the capital of Jarîd, one of Tûnis’ provinces. During our previous *hajj*, year 1109, we met Tûnis’ *amîr*, Ramzân Bey, at his encampment. He had come to collect the *kharâj* tax which is levied throughout the country. This is their custom (*sunna*), and that of those who emulate them – may God this *sunna* off and remove it from all of the lands of Islam without putting them through a trial, and may He fill these lands with everlasting justice and upright religion.\(^\text{120}\)

al-Khalîfa does, however, praise the Ḫusaynid *amîr* Mehmed Bey for building two fine *madrasas*, one in Tûzar and the other in Qâbis.\(^\text{121}\) Qâbis, the caravan’s next stop after Tûzar, was home to *shaykh* ’Alî al-Nûrî (d. 1118/1706). al-Nûrî was a like-minded *sunni* reformist scholar who studied with and receive the Nâṣîrî *wîrd* from Maḥmammad b. Nâṣîr in Cairo in 1076-7/1066-7. Upon his return to Tunisia, al-Nûrî founded a school in his home.\(^\text{122}\) During al-Khalîfa’s *hajj*, the Nâṣîriyya caravan stopped briefly outside of Qâbis before departing for Tripoli, where they arrived on 22 Sha’bân 1121/16 October 1709.\(^\text{123}\)

Tripoli was an important stopping point for the Nâṣîriyya pilgrims and others traveling overland across North Africa. al-Khalîfa quotes from al-’Ayyâshî’s description of how pilgrims used stay in Tripoli for one month to rest and prepare for the journey to Egypt.\(^\text{124}\) Tripoli was the last major city overland pilgrims encountered before traversing the “incomparably difficult” Barqa desert.\(^\text{125}\) He goes on to say that pilgrims would have to purchase all the supplies they would need for what would be a two to three month

\(^{120}\) Ibid., 160-1.

\(^{121}\) Ibid.


\(^{125}\) Ibid.
journey through this treacherous terrain. He notes that pilgrim traffic was a huge boon for Tripoli’s economy. al-ʿAyyāshī mentions that five or six pilgrim caravans could be present in the city at any given time as well as various armed groups preparing for maritime jihād.126 al-Khalīfa then adds that his teacher’s description is a bit dated. He writes that, in his day, pilgrims no longer took their time on their ḥajj and often tried to cross the Barqa desert in around 40 days.

From Tripoli, al-Khalīfa made his way along Libya’s Mediterranean coast stopping in Tājūrā’, home to a large Nāṣirī community,127 and Miṣrāṭa, the resting place of Aḥmad Zarrūq.128 Upon departing Miṣrāṭa, the Nāṣirī pilgrims entered the Barqa desert. This stretch of arid land extended until the Sīwa Oasis in modern-day Egypt. Its crossing presented the pilgrims with the greatest challenges they would face: unpredictable access to water and other supplies, getting lost and brigands. Unlike the previous portions of the journey, the Nāṣirīyya could not rely on settled populations to provide supplies and hospitality. Rather, they relied on Bedouin pastoralists who assembled in oases to do business with them.129 These were welcome but irregular encounters. More often than not, however, the pilgrims had to rely on whatever supplies they brought with them from Tripoli.

Navigating the desert also posed a significant challenge to the pilgrims. During this section of al-Khalīfa’s diary we read more frequently of the caravan losing some of its members or losing its way. On 20 Ramadan 1121/12 November 1709, he writes that

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126 Ibid.
127 Ibid., 194.
128 Ibid., 217-232.
129 Ibid. 242.
the caravan lost his nephew Ja‘far b. Mūsā. It was only at the end of their traveling day that the caravan realized he had been left behind, so al-Khalīfa dispatched two guides and a group of the caravan’s leaders, equipped with lamps, to look for him. al-Khalīfa writes, gratefully, that they succeeded in finding the young man and returning him to the caravan.\(^\text{130}\) A few days later, the caravan’s guide lost his way and they found themselves wandering for many hours before regaining the correct route. This episode had dangerous consequences for some of the pilgrims. Expecting to encounter water, some of them had chosen not to refill their water skins at an earlier well. al-Khalīfa writes that, as the caravan was finding its way, the pilgrims’ camels became very thirsty and one of them died.\(^\text{131}\) When they finally encountered a watering hole (ghadīr), he writes that everyone was overjoyed. “We knew that this was from God’s grace”, he writes, “for we had seen some rain [that day] but not enough to fill this watering hole, nor was there any water in any place close by […] Rather, God aided his emissaries, whom God Most High would not forsake.”\(^\text{132}\)

In addition to providing few supplies and the threat of getting lost, unsettled desert land also exposed the pilgrims to threat of brigandry. Reports of brigands (\(\text{al-\text{hīrāba}}\)) feature prominently in al-Khalīfa’s diary, especially in the Libyan desert and on the main \(\text{hajj}\) route between Cairo and the Ḥijāz. After arriving in the Sīwa Oasis, he writes that thieves stole six of the caravan’s camels.\(^\text{133}\) After this episode, he writes that, during his pilgrimage in 1096/1685, robbers raided the caravan’s camp while the pilgrims

\(^{130}\) al-Darʿī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya}, 239.  
\(^{131}\) Ibid., 246.  
\(^{132}\) Ibid.  
\(^{133}\) Ibid., 250.
were offering their prayers at sunset.\textsuperscript{134} As the Nāširīyya departed Sīwa in 1121/1709, they passed by a group of encamped brigands who greeted the pilgrims with a show of force. The caravan rallied and prepared to fight their enemies, firing their rifles into the air to frighten them. This scattered the brigands. Yet, when a messenger from the robbers approached the caravan, the Nāširīyya assured him and his compatriots of their safety. The caravan was able to avoid conflict with the brigands and continued that day’s journey in safety.\textsuperscript{135} Passing the Sīwa Oasis marked the caravan’s entrance into Egypt. From there, it was only a few days’ journey to Cairo, where al-Khalīfa’s caravan arrived on 22 Shawwāl 1121/14 December 1709. As one of the Muslim world’s major cultural and trading centers, Cairo made a deep impression on al-Khalīfa and his company.\textsuperscript{136} This city, with its large, diverse population, was truly a wonder of the world in the pilgrims’ eyes.\textsuperscript{137} During the 1121/1709 pilgrimage, the Nāširīyya only spent five days in Cairo on their way to Mecca,\textsuperscript{138} but stayed there for over two months on their return.\textsuperscript{139} Cairo offered the Nāširīyya the opportunity to rest and gather supplies for their journey to Mecca along the famous darb al-ḥijāz caravan route. Cairo was also a center of Islamic scholarship. Especially on their return from Mecca, the Nāširīyya took advantage of the opportunity to study and teach.\textsuperscript{140} Cairo was also home to a large number of Nāširī supporters. Arriving in Egypt brought the Nāširīyya back into contact

\textsuperscript{134} al-Darʿī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāširīyya}, 252.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 251.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 260.
\textsuperscript{137} In his detailed description of the city, al-Khalīfa mentions the people who hosted him, scholars he studied with, as well as the sites one should visit while there (\textit{mazārāt}). Ibid. 263-303.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 304.
\textsuperscript{139} On their return, al-Khalīfa reports the caravan arrived in Cairo on 7 Safar 1122/7 April 1710 and departed 15 Rabīʿ II 1122/13 June 1710. See: Ibid., 611ff.
\textsuperscript{140} These activities are discussed below.
with Ottoman governance with all of its tribulations and triumphs. al-Khalīfa quotes from al-ʿAyyāshī, who writes that Egypt’s rulers are “blinded by worldly life (al-dunyā),” deceived by their love of worldly leadership.141 This sentiment echoes the Nāṣirīyya’s generally ascetic worldview and disapproval of the extravagances and corruptions of political power. Nonetheless, al-Khalīfa admired Egypt’s Ottoman rulers for their maintenance of the darb al-ḥijāz.

Pilgrims typically traversed the darb al-ḥijāz, the final leg of the ḥajj between Cairo and Mecca, in 40 days. Here, all Western pilgrim caravans coalesced and joined with the Cairene caravan which escorted the kiswa, the ornamental shroud draped over the Kaʿba upon arrival in Mecca.142 Because of its importance and the frequency of its travelers, this route featured mile-markers and military garrisons that protected food and water supplies for pilgrims. al-Khalīfa adopts the word bandar (pl., banādir), more commonly used for a marine port, for these garrisoned outposts. Speaking of such a facility in Ṭagrūd, near to Suez, he writes, “were it not for God’s gentleness with his servants in the form of these banādir along the way, no one would be able to travel along [the darb al-ḥijāz] due to its many difficulties and lack of facilities (marāfiq).”143 We only find mention of formal, government-supported facilities for pilgrims during this stretch of the Nāṣirīyya’s journey.

However, the Turkish banādir were not enough to secure all portions of this route from bandits. Nowhere in al-Khalīfa’s diary do we read more instances of banditry than along the darb al-ḥijāz, especially in Sinai and northern Ḥijāz. He reports in Ayla that a

141 al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 257.
142 al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣirīyya, 277.
143 Ibid., 307.
number of Naṣirī pilgrims formed themselves into a company of musketeers (al-rumāt) to defend the caravan. Harassment gave way to assault on the pilgrims’ return from Mecca. After completing the hajj rites it appears that whatever respect the brigands may have had for the pilgrims disappeared and that the caravan found itself subject to increasingly invasive acts of theft and violence. Furthermore, despite the darb al-ḥijāz’s facilities, the pilgrims still suffered from the Ḥijāz’s extreme climate. al-Khalīfā writes that, after they left the Ḥijāzī port town of Wajh, a hot wind (al-sumūm) struck the caravan. They were forced to stop and the pilgrims began to run out of water. This caused a general panic. al-Khalīfā quotes from the Qur’an’s description of the hypocrites at the Battle of the Trench to describe the pilgrims’ dismay: “their hearts were in their throats.” Once the caravan found water, al-Khalīfā describes the ensuing pandemonium by invoking Qur’anic imagery of the Last Day: “On the day when… the Earth closes in on itself from all sides, people will wish to find a path into its center. On that day, people will be overcome with fear, ‘You will see them drunk, but they are not so.’” He reports that sixty Moroccan pilgrims died during this episode. In this way, the darb al-ḥijāz and its hardships represented the dramatic climax to the Nāṣiriyāya’s journey as they came closer to their destination, Mecca.

al-Khalīfā dedicates nearly 100 pages to describing his hajj rites, Mecca’s sites (mashāhid) and the scholars he met there during this and his previous pilgrimages. He

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144 Ibid., 321.
145 Ibid., 605-6, 608.
146 Qur’an, 33:10.
147 Quotation is from Qur’an, 22:2. Quoted in al-Darʿī, al-Rihla al-Nāṣiriyya, 338.
148 Ibid.
149 Ibid., 364-457.
also relates many poems praising Mecca and the stations of the *hajj*. As in other portions of his diary, he quotes substantially from al-ʿAyyāshīʾs *riḥla* and comments on his teacher’s observations. al-Khalīfaʾs exhaustive treatment of this portion of his journey indicates the *hajj*ʾs importance to Moroccan Sufis. For al-Khalīfa, arriving at the Holy City was like mounting a spiritual summit. This was Godʾs House, and to witness it with oneʾs own eyes was to witness the Divine and fulfill the Divine commandment.

After completing the *hajj* rites, the Nāṣirī caravan remained in Mecca for a few days before departing on 23 Dhū l-Ḥijja 1121/22 February 1710. They were the first caravan to do so, which was the Moroccan pilgrimsʾ custom. Moroccan pilgrims displayed a unique enthusiasm for visiting Medina on their return from *hajj*. As the Prophet Muhammadʾs resting place, Medina bore special significance for the Nāṣirīyya particularly, and for Maghribī Muslims more generally. The Nāṣirīyya identified the Prophet Muḥammad as their immediate guide, and the emulation of his *sunna* formed a key part of their spiritual path. Furthermore, Medina was also home to Mālik b. Anas, the eponym of the Mālikī *madḥhab*.

As in Mecca, al-Khalīfa is effusive in his treatment of Medina, dedicating over 100 pages to describing five days that passed “like a dream.” He provides a detailed description of the cityʾs sites (*mashāhid*). He receives a tour of these from Muḥammad al-Akhšāṣī, the Nāṣirīyyaʾs *muqaddam* in Medina, whose guidebook captures al-

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150 See al-ʿAyyāshīʾs poem in Ibid., 364-5.
154 Ibid., 599.
Khalīfa’s attention and admiration.\textsuperscript{155} He also lists the scholars he met with during this and his previous pilgrimages.\textsuperscript{156} In addition, al-Khalīfa’s comments give us an indication of his and his brotherhood’s reception by religious leaders in the Ḥijāz. He quotes a poem recited to him by ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Khalīfī, the imam of the Prophet’s Mosque. In these verses, al-Khalīfī praises al-Khalīfa for his knowledge, piety and efforts to revive the Prophet’s sunna before requesting the Naṣirī shaykh’s ijāza in his transmissions and to enter the Naṣirī path.\textsuperscript{157} Later, al-Khalīfa records another poem recited to him by Śāliḥ b. Aḥmad al-Maṭarī, the imam of masjid al-Qubā’, that praises the Naṣirī shaykh as the “imam of this age (imām al-waqt)” and leader of the best Sufi path.\textsuperscript{158} As was the case elsewhere, the Naṣiriyya’s reformist rhetoric resonated with residents of the Prophet’s city.

On their return to Tamgrūt, the Naṣiriyya essentially retraced their original path with some important deviations. After spending a little over two months in Cairo on their return, the caravan then departed for Alexandria, where they met a large contingent of Naṣirī-affiliated students. During al-Khalīfa’s visit in 1122/1710, he appointed a certain Muḥammad al-Nāḍūr as their muqaddam.\textsuperscript{159} From Alexandria, they stuck to the coastal desert rather than returning to Sīwa, but otherwise followed their initial path through the Barqa desert to Tripoli.\textsuperscript{160} From there, they returned through Qābis and Tūzar and proceeded along the northern edge of the Algerian Sahara. In 1122/1710, the caravan

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 469.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 517-533
\textsuperscript{157} al-Rihla al-Naṣiriyya, 517-9.
\textsuperscript{158} al-Rihla al-Naṣiriyya, 519.
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 624-5.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 631-671.
avoided stopping in Aghwāṭ due to reported civil unrest there.\textsuperscript{161} Later, in the village of Abū Semghūn, al-Khalīfa found himself drawn into a local dispute. He succeeded in mediating a “perpetual” truce between the conflicting factions which was recorded in the presence of local witnesses and the Nāširiyya’s representatives.\textsuperscript{162} After passing by Sijimāsa, the caravan began to encounter more of their local supporters who gave the pilgrims a hero’s welcome. At last, on 5 Ramaḍān 1122/28 October 1710, the Nāširiyya caravan arrived back in Tamgrūṭ.\textsuperscript{163} In accordance with the Prophet Muhammad’s sunna, al-Khalīfa notified his family of his arrival via courier several days in advance. He entered the zāwiya in the morning, after fajr prayer, and offered two rakʿās of voluntary prayer in the zāwiya’s mosque before heading to the cemetery to greet his father and his companions buried there.

E. Institutions supporting the *Hajj*

This overview of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s *hajj* journey provides a clear picture of the challenges facing Nāširī pilgrims on the overland *hajj* route, as well as the institutions that contributed to their caravan’s success. Among these were an array of common, external institutions that supported the caravan on its journey. As *hajj* diaries make clear, the Nāširiyya’s pilgrims benefitted from an array of preexisting social institutions that had supported caravan traffic across the Sahara from as early as the 2\textsuperscript{nd}/8\textsuperscript{th} century. By Ibn Nāṣir’s and al-Khalīfa’s time, centuries of continuous pilgrim traffic along the North African littoral led to the emergence of common institutions oriented towards fulfilling

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 718.
\item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 725-6.
\item \textsuperscript{163} al-Darʿī, *al-Rihla al-Nāširiyya*, 739.
\end{itemize}
pilgrims’ needs. These included particular practices, such as pastoralist tribes seeking to do business with pilgrims, the availability of local guides, as well as meta-institutions like the *sharī’a*, which provided a legal and normative recourse for the resolution of disputes, and *riḥla* narratives, which served as guidebooks for overland pilgrims.

Nāṣirī sources also mention some specifically *hajj*-oriented institutions. These include the *banādir* along the *darb al-hijāz*.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, charitable institutions existed to support pilgrims, especially in the Western portion of the *hajj* route. On his return from Mecca in 1122/1710, al-Khalīfa records visiting a ‘kitchen’ (*maṭʿam*) for pilgrims, as well as non-Nāṣirī Sufi lodges.¹⁶⁵ Traveling in the 1190s/1780s, Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī reports visiting the *zāwiya* of Sīdī Barakāt b. Muḥammad, a descendent of Abū Muḥammad Śāliḥ. More than five centuries after its foundation, al-Nāṣirī reports that the lodge and its endowments continued to provide shelter and provision for pilgrims, especially the poor.¹⁶⁶ Similar lodges existed in Tūzar¹⁶⁷ and outside Qābis.¹⁶⁸ These institutions served all pilgrims and travelers regardless of their affiliation with a particular caravan. In addition, less formal institutions, such as the impromptu markets formed by pastoralists in numerous oases along the pilgrimage route, served pilgrims’ needs.

Furthermore, the Nāṣirīyya benefitted from their particular institutionalization as a transregional Sufi brotherhood. al-Khalīfa’s diary reveals that he assumed some

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¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 662.
¹⁶⁷ Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī describes the *zāwiya* affiliated with al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. 'Alī. See *al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā*, 263.
¹⁶⁸ *al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā* mentions another *zāwiya* founded by Abū Muḥammad Śāliḥ and the *zāwiya* of Abū Hilāl. See *al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā*, 264 and 266.
communal responsibilities as the caravan’s leader \((\text{amīr})\). He hired guides\(^{169}\) and corresponded with communities along their route to arrange supplies and meet other needs.\(^{171}\) The caravan’s \(shūrā\) council supplemented his executive role, meeting to decide issues pertaining to the caravan as a whole.\(^{172}\) At the same time, however, communal responsibility was shared with individual pilgrims who were responsible for their own provisions and protection. We see this in some of the crises that afflicted al-Khalīfa during his \(hajj\) in 1121/1709-10, such as the heat wave that struck the caravan in the Hijāz. As the pilgrims’ water supply dwindled, there was no communal reserve to turn to. Rather the pilgrims had whatever they had taken with them. Additionally, al-Khalīfa’s language indicates the pilgrims organized themselves to form a self-defense force against bandits without any direction from the caravan’s leaders. However, the Nāṣiriyya’s efforts to establish a translocal network of adepts show their efforts to ameliorate these communal and individual hardships through an additional layer of support along the pilgrimage route.

Maḥammad b. Nāṣir began spreading the Nāṣiriyya \(wird\) in communities across the North African pilgrimage route, as well as in Cairo and the Ḥijāz, as early as his first pilgrimage in 1070/1660. After Ibn Nāṣir’s death in 1085/1674, his son and successor

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\(^{169}\) Aḥmad al-Khalīfa served as \(\text{amīr}\) during his last three \(hajj\) pilgrimages.

\(^{170}\) See al-Darʿī, \(al-\text{Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya}\), 94, 247.

\(^{171}\) See Ibid., 249, 645.

\(^{172}\) ʿAmālik writes that two representatives chosen by each tribal group in the caravan comprised this council. It also featured a \(qādī\) charged with resolving disputes among the pilgrims, selected by the caravan’s \(\text{amīr}\). See ʿAmālik, \(Jawāmi‘\), v. 1, 194-6. al-Khalīfa’s description the caravan’s struggle to find sufficient water during their return through the Libyan desert displays the nuance relationship between his role as the caravan’s \(\text{amīr}\), the authority of the \(shūrā\) council and the individual pilgrims’ responsibility for their own safety and provisions. See al-Darʿī, \(al-\text{Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya}\), 643-4.
Aḥmad al-Khalīfa reaffirmed and expanded these bonds during his three *ḥajj* pilgrimages in 1096/1685, 1109/1697 and 1121/1709. This transregional network of adepts and affiliates provided a level of service and familiarity in addition to the aforementioned institutions.

**Fig. 4.5:** Geographic distribution of Nāṣirī *ahl al-mahabba* between 1070/1660 – 1192/1782. Nāṣirī travelogues record the *ahl al-mahabba*’s presence in 28 distinct locations. The star emblems represent communities with designated *muqaddam*, or local delegate. The crescent emblems represent the eight Nāṣirī branch lodges established along the *ḥajj* route. The other markers represent the locations of individuals or communities who took the Nāṣirī *wird* during this period.

This map shows the extent of the Nāṣiriyya’s affiliate network along the *ḥajj* route in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries. In exchange for their support, these communities gained the Nāṣiriyya’s blessing, access to their knowledge and spiritual traditions, and the satisfaction of helping to maintain one of Islam’s most important communal religious practices. Access to learning appears to have been a key motivation for local
communities, many of whom reproduced the Nāṣirīyya’ s scholarly tradition for generations throughout the 12th/18th and into the 13th/19th century.

Due to the ease of entering the Nāṣirīyya, and the simplicity of its devotional regimen, the formality of the *ahl al-maḥabba’s* bonds to the brotherhood varied from community to community. A large portion of the *ahl al-maḥabba* were individuals or families who took the Nāṣīrī *wird* from Ibn Nāṣir or Aḥmad al-Khalīfa, which they practiced on their own.  

However, a number of communities embraced the Nāṣirīyya as a whole. Some of these established their own Nāṣīrī affiliated *zāwiya*. Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa appointed local delegates in these areas to lead their communities and induct new members into the order. An overview of these communities’ composition reveals some important patterns to the Nāṣirīyya’s spread.

As seen on the map above, the Nāṣirīyya spread most densely on the Western part of the overland pilgrimage route along a corridor beginning in Sijilmāsa and continuing through the Algerian Zāb and Libya’s Mediterranean coast as far as the Barqa Desert in eastern Libya. Nāṣīrī authors considered this portion of the *hajj* route to be neglected in comparison with the *darb al-ḥijāz* between Cairo and Mecca. Here, as in Morocco, the Nāṣirīyya expressed their authority in this area through effective social action grounded in their discourse of reverence. Nāṣīrī authors report Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s efforts to improve road conditions and settle disputes between sedentary communities and

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173 For example, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣīrī writes about meeting the Awlād Sīdī Abī Nawāḥ in rural Tiyūt, Algeria in 1196/1782. This family’s connection with the Nāṣīrīyya extended back to Ahmad al-Khalīfa’s lifetime. *See al-Rihla al-Nāṣīrīyya al-Kubrā*, v. 1, 192.

174 A descriptive, annotated table of these communities is included in the Appendix.


pastoralist tribes. On his return from ḥajj in 1122/1710, the Nāṣirī shaykh was invited by his followers to exhort Libya’s ruling bey to rule with justice and care for religious scholars. The Nāṣirīyya’s “socially conscious mysticism” resonated along North Africa’s Saharan frontiers where banditry and exploitation by Ottoman rulers disrupted civil life. Many of the groups who became Nāṣirī affiliates also encouraged social stability by inculcating righteousness in their communities.

The composition of Nāṣirī communities along the ḥajj route shows their discourse’s appeal among scholars and other members of the literate class. Data on the Nāṣirīyya’s spread shows that a vast majority of their affiliates along the overland ḥajj route were literate and educated, to some degree, in the Islamic sciences. It was common, as well, for Nāṣirī members to occupy positions of religious authority, serving as juriconsults, religious scholars, judges or the leaders of mosques. This was true in both rural and urban communities. For example, in 1096/1685, Aḥmad al-Hashtūki reports that a certain ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Rūmānī, the imam of Biskra’s central mosque, was a Nāṣirī. A century later when Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī visited the city, he gave al-Khalīfa credit for pacifying the Aghwāt tribes along Algeria’s Saharan frontier. See al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā, v. 1, 197.

178 al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 664.
179 ʿAmālik credits the Nāṣirīyya’s spread along the overland ḥajj route to its neglect by North Africa’s Ottoman rulers. See ʿAmālik, Jawānīb, v. 1, p. 180. Nāṣirī authors are not shy in sharing their disdain for Ottoman rulers. For example, al-Hashtūkī strongly criticizes Turkish oppression of religious scholars, which he identifies as a key factor in the decline of Islamic learning in Biskra, Algeria. See “Hadiyat al-Malik al-ʿAllām”, folio 146ff. There is some evidence that the Nāṣirīyya attracted support of Ottoman opponents in this region. In 1196/1782, Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī writes about meeting an exiled political leader from Ouargla, Algeria who expressed “affection” for the Nāṣirīyya’s founders. See al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā, v. 1, 216.
180 Specific data on these communities can be found in the Appendix.
181 al-Hashtūkī, “Hadiyat al-Malik al-ʿAllām”, folios 133 and 144. This meeting is discussed in detail below.
that position remained in the hands of a Nasirī adept.\textsuperscript{182} He also reports that the city’s qādi was a member of the order.\textsuperscript{183} We find similar patterns in Figīg, Sijilmāsa and Tripoli, where Nasirī adepts served as qādis and muftis in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.\textsuperscript{184} Similarly, several Nasirī communities along the hajj route formed their own zawiyas that served as centers of learning and social action. al-Khalīfa reports that a Nasirī affiliated madrasa in Awlād Jalāl, Algeria provided education and safe refuge for students from surrounding rural areas.\textsuperscript{185} The Awlād Sīdī Nājī, a clan located in the area of Sīdī ’Uqba, Algeria, transmitted the Nasirī path over several generations and established a zawiya that preserved Nasirī practices into the late 12th/18th century.\textsuperscript{186} Nasirī adepts also established several teaching zawiyas along the Western Libyan coast as well.\textsuperscript{187} These cases demonstrate lasting appeal of the Nasiriyya’s religious discourse in these areas.

Nasirī shaykhs also brought preexisting religious communities into the brotherhood’s fold. We see this with regards to the Awlād Sīdī Nāšir, a pastoralist tribe whose presence extended from Sirte to Ajdābiya in the Eastern Libyan desert. Aḥmad al-Khalīfa describes this group as devoted Sufis who provided food to travelers in this treacherous region before joining the Nasirīyya at al-Khalīfa’s hands on his return from Mecca in 1122/1710.\textsuperscript{188} During this same trip, al-Khalīfa inducted ʿAbd Allāḥ al-Majdhub into the Nasirīyya and appointed him as muqaddam for the Nasirī community in

\textsuperscript{182} al-Nāširī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāširīyya al-Kubrā}, v. 1, 222.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., v. 1, 221.
\textsuperscript{184} See Appendix.
\textsuperscript{187} See Appendix.
\textsuperscript{188} al-Darʿī, \textit{al-Riḥla al-Nāširīyya}, 655ff.
Tunisia.\(^{189}\) al-Majdhūb was already the leader of his own zāwiya and was active in pacifying pastoral tribes in the region.\(^{190}\) He invited al-Khalīfa to visit him personally, and he wrote that he inducted al-Majdhūb into the Nāṣirīyya and appointed him as a muqaddam while waiting for the day’s heat to subside.\(^ {191}\) More than seven decades later, Ibn Ṭabd al-Salām al-Nāsirī reports that al-Majdhūb’s community was still active and loyal to the Nāṣirīyya.\(^ {192}\)

The sustained Nāṣirī presence along the Western portion of the overland ḥajj route reflects the successful spread of their discourse of reverent love among individuals and communities in the area. In some instances, the transmission of the Nāṣirī wird led to the growth of new spiritual communities who worked towards these same objectives through education and social action. In other cases, Nāṣirī shaykhs forged bonds with communities already engaged in similar activities. Additionally, their revivalist discourse appealed to religious scholars seeking the discursive tools to promote the adoption of Islamic values in their communities. In contrast to the Western ḥajj route, the Nāṣirī presence in Egypt and the Hijaz was limited to urban areas and the scholarly classes. As discussed below, the Nāṣirīyya’s religious discourse had similar appeal, but more limited expression, and its spread was closely linked to the brotherhood’s knowledge production activities.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 694-5.


\(^{191}\) al-Dārī, al-Rīḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 691.

Seeking Knowledge during the Hajj

Nāṣirī hajj diaries and academic records document the transmission of religious knowledge along the hajj route, in private homes, marketplaces as well as more formal spaces like mosques, zāwiyas and madrasas. A major focus of these efforts was the acquisition of authoritative chains of transmission in hadīth. The previous chapter studied Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s efforts in this field in detail. This section investigates three other principal Nāṣirī scholarly activities during the pilgrimage: acquiring and transmitting texts, teaching, and giving legal opinions. Nāṣirī scholars’ widespread engagement in these activities helped transmit Nāṣirī thought and practices along the hajj. It also served to strengthen the Nāṣiriyya’s scholarly authority in Morocco and deepened the bonds between the Nāṣiriyya and their North African and Middle Eastern peers.

Texts and literature formed a central part of the Nāṣiriyya’s scholarly tradition. The hajj provided the brotherhood’s scholars and leaders the opportunity to acquire texts for their personal use and for their zāwiya. There is ample evidence of Ibn Nāṣir’s personal involvement in book acquisition during his two hajj pilgrimages in 1070/1660 and 1076/1665. Manuscripts purchased by Ibn Nāṣir in the Middle East are still preserved in the zāwiya’s manuscript library in Tamgrūt.
Aḥmad al-Khalīfa continued his father’s efforts to collect books during his tenure as the Nāṣirīyya’s shaykh. During the ḥajj, al-Khalīfa paid close attention to book culture and visited several private libraries during his journey. In Figīg, al-Khalīfa visited the library of the descendants of ‘Abd al-Jabbār al-Figīgī (d.c. 920/1514). When he visited the collection during his ḥajj in 1096/1685, he noted this library’s many rare books and copies of this family’s academic records, but that, in 1121/1709, it was “on the verge of ruin.”

al-Khalīfa’s diary documents more libraries in Egypt and the Hijaz. In Cairo, in 1121/1709, he describes how his host, a certain shaykh al-Ḥasan, “owns many books, and continues to collect and search for more volumes.” In Mecca, al-Khalīfa mentions a conversation with the Ḥanafī muftī Muḥammad Tāj al-Dīn after Friday prayers:

I met him in front of our house, by the Masjid al-Ḥarām, and he told me that he was our neighbor… I asked him about some commentaries on [al-Buṣīrī’s] al-Hamzīyya and he told me that he owned Ibn Ḥajar [al-’Asqalānī’s]. I told him that

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195 Ibid., 284.
I wanted to look at Ibn Ḥajar’s references to shaykh Marzūq and shaykh al-Kaffānī, so he sent away his son, who returned with [the book]. [Muftī Taj al-Dīn] also gave me the first and third volumes of al-Birmāwī’s commentary on al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ. He told me that the second volume was in the possession of ʿAbd Allah b. Sālim al-Baṣrī.  

Soon after this meeting, al-Khalīfa met with al-Baṣrī, Mecca’s leading ḥadīth scholar during this period. Al-Baṣrī was pleased to see al-Khalīfa and invited the Moroccan shaykh to his home and offered to pay for his accommodation while in Mecca. When al-Khalīfa arrived at al-Baṣrī’s house, he describes finding his host “in his private library (fī bayt kutubihi) which is encircled by books on all sides.” He writes that al-Baṣrī owned a copy of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal’s Musnad. al-Khalīfa also saw al- Baṣrī’s handwritten copy of the Yūnīniyya asl of al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ. After leaving Mecca, al-Khalīfa also took notes on the book culture in neighboring Medina. He reports that its residents catalog their mosques’ libraries on an annual basis, and return borrowed books to their owners and to public libraries on the 17th of Dhū al-Qiʿda. Similarly, during his ḥajj in 1196/1782, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salaam al-Nāṣiri keenly observed the book culture along his route. He notes finding rare books in markets and libraries in Sijilmāsa.

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199 Ibid.
200 Ibid.
201 al-Khalīfa writes: “It was Medina’s residents’ custom on the 17th of Dhū al-Qiʿda to… return any books they had borrowed to their respective owners or to the overseer of the library from which they had borrowed.” See Ibid., 533.
Tuzūr, Tripoli, Miṣrāṭa and Cairo, and dedicates a whole chapter to the books he saw in Mecca.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām’s and al-Khālīfa’s diaries describe different practices for book acquisition. As we saw in al-Khālīfa’s meeting with shaykh Tāj al-Dīn in Mecca, gift giving was one means of acquiring books during the ḥajj. In addition to gifts, al-Khālīfa also purchased books in markets or commissioned copies of them. al-Khālīfa writes that, in Sijīlmasa in 1121/1709, he purchased paper (al-kāḥdh) and commissioned a certain ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Rāshīdī to copy two commentaries of al-Jazıli’s Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt and a text entitled Tanbīḥ al-Anām. On his return from Mecca, nearly a year later, he found his copy of Tanbīḥ al-Anām waiting for him while the commentaries on Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt remained incomplete.

Ahmad al-Khālīfa also purchased books while on hajj. Upon his departure from Egypt, on his way back to Morocco, he notes purchasing “a great number of books” but provides no further details. His biographers state these texts formed the basis of the library that al-Khālīfa began to construct at the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya upon returning from his final hajj pilgrimage. Among these is a copy of Ibn ʿAbbās’ Tafsīr, which al-Khālīfa

203 Ibid., v. 1, 252, 896.
204 Ibid., v. 1, 344-6.
205 Ibid., v. 1, 361.
206 Ibid., v. 1, 636ff.
207 Ibid., v. 1, 569ff.
210 al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 730.
211 Nāṣir al-Darʿī, al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya, 611.
212 See previous discussion in Chapter 3.
purchased in Cairo for 5 riyals in 1122/1710. Another of al-Khalīfa’s major purchases was the Yunīnīyya recension of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, which he bought for 80 gold dinars while on hajj. The Nāṣirīyya’s hajj diaries and the content of its zāwiya’s manuscript library attest to an active manuscript trade along the pilgrimage route in the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.

Figure 4.7: Ownership inscription from a copy of the tafsīr of Ibn ʿAbbās purchased by Aḥmad al-Khalīfa in Cairo in 1122/1710. It reads: “Purchased by the servant of his Almighty Lord, Aḥmad son of (najl) Nāṣir al-Darʿī, for the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya, may God protect it from every tyrant.”

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213 See below.
214 ʿAmālik, Jawānib, v. 2, 298.
Depictions of Nāṣirī scholars transmitting texts shows how Islam’s epistemic codes allowed for knowledge to be exchanged in motion, sometimes quite literally. Aḥmad al-Khalīfa writes that, while stopped in Ḍayf Allah al-Shārīf al-Idrīsī who traveled alongside the Nāṣirī shaykh for a few miles around the Jarīd salt flats. al-Khalīfa writes that, during this brief meeting, his companion copied dictations of three Nāṣirī devotional works.\(^{218}\)  

On his return from Mecca in 1122/1710, al-Khalīfa records meeting a certain Ḍayf Allah al-Shārīf al-Idrīsī who traveled alongside the Nāṣirī shaykh for a few miles around the Jarīd salt flats. al-Khalīfa writes that, during this brief meeting, his companion copied dictations of three Nāṣirī devotional works.\(^{218}\) al-Hashtūkī records a similar encounter during his hājj in 1096/1685. He writes about meeting a pious man “with some practice in poetry” upon his arrival in Tūzur.\(^{219}\) This man took a liking to one of al-Hashtūkī’s poetic commentaries and began copying it during their meeting. When it came time for al-Hashtūkī to depart, his acquaintance was still busy copying the work, so he followed al-Hashtūkī to the neighboring zāwiya of Sīdī Abī Hilāl, completing his copy along the way.\(^{220}\) In addition to showing the fluidity of textual transmission along the hājj route, these examples demonstrate the Nāṣirīyya’s appeal as religious guides and scholars in communities along the pilgrimage route. As a result, the order’s leaders and scholars were often granted the authority to teach and give legal opinions, giving them significant influence over scholarly and religious practices in the communities they traveled through.

\(^{218}\) These are *Sayf al-Nasr* and *al-Wasila*, two of Ibn Nāṣir’s poems, and *al-Silsila al-Nūrānīyya*, an unknown work. See Ibid., 705.  
\(^{220}\) Ibid.
Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī’s rihla in 1096/1685 illustrates how Nāṣirī scholars constructed their authority within and without the brotherhood’s transregional affiliate network. Based on his experience as a judge, al-Hashtūkī was chosen to serve as the main jurist (faqīh) for his caravan. In this capacity, he was responsible for providing legal opinions and presiding over major transactions. He describes receiving petitioners, students and scholars throughout his journey. When engaging with fellow Nāṣirīs, al-Hashtūkī’s authority was respected and accepted a priori.221 Outside of the ahl al-maḥabba, these exchanges were more contested. For example, al-Hashtūkī met with a group of religious scholars and students in the town of ʿAyn Māḍī. To test al-Hashtūkī, one of his interlocutors asked him to explain the grammar and syntax of a particular Qur’anic verse. al-Hashtūkī did so, but not to his companion’s liking. He disagreed with al-Hashtūkī’s use of grammatical opinions outside of the Baṣran school, so he asked for further justification from the Qur’an, poetry and literary prose. al-Hashtūkī provided the examples he requested and, in doing so, won the man over. He writes: “the man conceded and kissed my hand and asked me to read through the Ajurrāmiyya with him. [I agreed], and he read a few of its chapters with me. He then asked me for my ijāza for [this text]. I granted this to him, just as my teachers granted me their ijāza for the text, going back to its author, may God the Exalted be pleased with all of them.”222

Later, al-Hashtūkī received a warmer reception from Nāṣirī scholars and students in Biskra. He writes that, after failing to locate any scholars in the city’s congregational mosque, he was invited to a gathering at the home of Sīdī ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Rummānī, a

221 al-Hashtūkī describes being sought out by in Fīgīg by a local Nāṣirī adept looking looking to study with the caravan’s faqīh. See Ibid., folios 99-100.
Nāṣirī adept and the mosque’s *imam*. The attendees took advantage of al-Hashtūkī’s presence to read through ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Akhḍarī’s *Sullam*, an introductory text in logic.\(^{223}\) They also read through sections of Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī for which al-Hashtūkī gave his *ijāza*. He also appointed one of the attendees, a *faqīh* named Abū l-Qāsim al-Jamar, to begin teaching the canonical *ḥadīth* work in the city’s congregational mosque.\(^{224}\) He also mentions that he tutored al-Jamar in his home for several days.\(^{225}\) Later, al-Hashtūkī writes that he taught Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in the city’s congregational mosque before his departure:

> We taught Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in [Biskra’s] grand mosque, and a great many people attended. [Though] there were no commentaries or supercommentaries on it at all, except from al-Zarkashī, we taught the Books of Faith and Knowledge with rigor and verification (*qira‘at bahth wa taḥqīq*). Truly, God is the guarantor of success.\(^{226}\)

He then relates a number of juridical questions that he responded to.\(^{227}\) These examples illustrate how Nāṣirī scholars were able to influence local scholars and their practices through the exchanges enabled by the overland *hajj*.

al-Hashtūkī’s meeting in ’Ayn Māḍī shows how his command of Islam’s discursive tradition far exceeded that of his local interlocutors. We see the same in his descriptions of Biskra. As noted, al-Hashtūkī found no scholars teaching in the city’s congregational mosque, an institution that should, in normal circumstances, serve as a center for communal learning. The lack of a public scholarly community did not deter him. He strove to have productive private exchanges with local scholars and reformed

\(^{223}\) Ibid., folio 138.  
\(^{224}\) Ibid.  
\(^{225}\) Ibid., folio 144.  
\(^{226}\) Ibid., folio 142.  
\(^{227}\) Ibid., folio 143.
Biskra’s status quo by introducing the instruction of *Ṣahih al-Bukhārī* in the congregational mosque. The time he spent tutoring Abū al-Qāsim al-Jamar shows his concern with making sure his new protégé was qualified to assume this teaching assignment. These classes, and the example al-Hashtūkī set in his own lectures on *Ṣahih Bukhārī*, show his concern with applying a *taḥqīq*-based approach to the transmitted sciences. This is the same scholarly approach he learned while studying with Ibn Nāṣir in Tamgrūt.

Several Nāṣirī affiliates along the Western *hajj* route established their own teaching *zāwiyas* that reproduced Nāṣirī practices and the brotherhood’s rigorous approach to the transmitted sciences. We see this in the biography of the descendants of Sīdī Nājī, a clan in central Algeria that embraced the Nāṣirīyya at the hands of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir. The 12th/18th century traveler al-Wartīlānī describes perfomring the *hajj* in 1153/1740 with a student of Sīdī Nājī’s son ‘Abd al-Hafīz. ʿAbd al-Hafīz established a teaching *zāwiya* near to Zarība that reproduced many of the practices present at the Nāṣirīyya *zāwiya* in Tamgrūt. al-Wartīlānī describes this school as grounded in the transmitted sciences, especially grammar, which occupies “the young and the old” there. He describes his companion as deeply imbued with his teacher’s methods and etiquette:

He was generous and kind, never hesitating to feed the needy during our journey. He also had extensive knowledge Prophetic traditions (*kāna yaʾrīf al-sunan*)

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228 See previous discussion in Chapter 3.
229 Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī reports visiting this *zāwiya* in 1196/1782 and finding that its residents recited Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s poem *Sayf al-Nāṣr* every morning after reciting a *ḥizb* of the Qur’an. This is the same devotional style as in the Nāṣirīyya *zāwiya* in Tamgrūt. See al-Nāṣirī, *al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā*, v. 1, 241.
kathīran), so that when I visited Badr, Mecca and Medina with him, it was as if he was the one who founded them. He had a command in all of the general, i.e. transmitted, sciences.\textsuperscript{231}

Other Nāširī influenced scholarly families in the Western corridor of the pilgrimage showed similar characteristics.\textsuperscript{232}

A. Nāširī Scholars in Egypt and the Hijaz

The Nāširīyya spread in a different fashion along the Eastern portions of the hajj route. As al-Khalīfa’s diary shows, Ottoman forces were present along the entirety of the darb al-ḥijāz which reduced the need for zāwiyas to protect pilgrims and travelers. The darb al-ḥijāz was the confluence of all Western and Eastern pilgrim caravans. Here, the Nāširīyya often traveled with the Egyptian caravan from Cairo, choosing to blend into the pilgrim crowd rather than stand apart. However, the Nāširīyya’s appeal as scholars did not lessen in this environment. Historical records show that, beginning with Maḥammad b. Nāšir’s first pilgrimages, the Nāširīyya made a significant impression on their Eastern counterparts. They were regarded for their knowledge and piety, praised for their commitment to reviving the Prophetic sunna and command of Islam’s discursive tradition. Cairo and the Hijaz, especially Medina, proved to be fertile ground for scholarly exchanges between Nāširīs and their Eastern counterparts.

Accounts of Ibn Nāšir’s pilgrimages in 1070/1660 and 1076/1665 reveal that he established strong bonds with the Cairene scholarly community as well as with individual scholars in Mecca and Medina. His impact was sufficient to garner the attention of late

\textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{232} See Appendix.
11th/17th century Damascene chronicler Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī (d. 1110/1699) who gave Ibn Nāṣir a concise entry in his biographical dictionary Khulāṣat al-Athar. There he labels the Moroccan shaykh as the “reviver of the Shadhilī path (mujaddid al-ṭarīqa al-shādhillīyya)” and “unique in his age (awḥad al-dahr).” He also noted Ibn Nāṣir’s affiliation with religious scholars and jurists. Al-Muḥibbī also refers to Ibn Nāṣir’s renown among Moroccans whom he describes as “universally agreeing on his greatness.” However, the lack of details in al-Muḥibbī’s account suggests that he only learned of Ibn Nāṣir from second hand sources.

A better account of Ibn Nāṣir’s bonds with Middle Eastern scholars comes from his biographer, Muṣṭafā b. Fatḥ Allāh al-Ḥamawī (d. 1123/1711), who studied with Ibn Nāṣir in Cairo in 1076/1665 and later met Aḥmad al-Khalīfah in Mecca in 1121/1709. al-Ḥamawī includes a biography of Ibn Nāṣir in his biographical dictionary Fawā’id al-Irtīḥāl. He writes:

[Ibn Nāṣir] was the leading scholar of Morocco in his age and an imam in tafsīr, hadīth and the fiqh of Mālik… all [people’s] hearts loved and believed in him due to his awe-inspiring and beautiful character, and [his] modesty and generosity… He came to Egypt once in 1070[1660] and again in 1076[1665]. I met him and studied with him then, and he gave me ijāza in his transmissions. While in Egypt he stayed in ‘Abd al-Salām al-Laqqānī’s home due to their longstanding friendly relationship via correspondence. While in Egypt, [Ibn Nāṣir] studied with our shaykh Muḥammad al-Bābilī, ‘Alī al-Shabrāmallasī, ‘Abd al-Salām al-Laqqānī and ‘Abd al-Mu’īnī al-Mālikī. Many studied with him as well, including the

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234 Ibid.
235 al-Muḥibbī does not mention any of Ibn Nāṣir’s texts nor his students, yet refers to being asked about him often by Moroccan visitors. It’s possible that he got an account of Ibn Nāṣir from Moroccan scholar Yaḥyā al-Shāwī who met al-Muḥibbī in Istanbul in the 1070s/1660s. See Khaled El-Rouayheb, Islamic Intellectual History, 158.
al-Ḥamawī’s entry reveals that Ibn ʿAlāʾ’s scholarly prowess, especially in the transmitted sciences, and refined, pious character strongly appealed to his Egyptian counterparts. The network he established in Cairo was composed of both North African émigrés and local Egyptians. al-Ḥamawī mentions two of Ibn ʿAlāʾ’s Moroccan students who made an impact in Eastern scholarly circles. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Rūdānī studied four years with Ibn ʿAlāʾ in Tamgrūt before traveling to Fāṣ and eventually the Middle East. ’Abd al-Mālik al-Sijilmāsī is likely a reference to ’Abd al-Mālik al-Tajmūʿī who studied with Ibn ʿAlāʾ and later became the chief qāḍī of Sijilmāsa. Both al-Rūdānī and al-Tajmūʿī earned esteem in Eastern circles as ḥadīth scholars, the former during his long stay in Cairo and the Hijāz and the latter during his ḥajj pilgrimage.

al-Ḥamawī also mentions Ibn ʿAlāʾ’s relationship with ’Abd al-Salām al-Laqqānī, the son of prominent Egyptian scholar Ibrāhīm al-Laqqānī and a teacher at the al-Azhar mosque-university. al-Laqqānī was a descendant of Nūr al-Dīn and Shams al-Dīn al-Laqqānī, two 10th/16th century Egyptian jurists who studied with Ahmad Zarrūq. Khushaim writes that both men relocated to Miṣrāta to study with Zarrūq prior to

238 For El-Rouayheb’s discussion of al-Rūdānī’s intellectual impact, see Islamic Intellectual History, 160-9.
returning to Cairo and enjoying careers as leading Mālikī jurists. Based on their common Zarrūqī heritage, al-Laqqānī and Ibn Nāṣīr developed a close bond, with the former serving as the latter’s host in Cairo during his two *hajj* pilgrimages. This relationship provided Ibn Nāṣīr with entry into al-Azhar’s scholarly circles. One of his Egyptian students, Manṣūr al-Ṭūkhī (d. 1090/1679), was the *imam* of al-Azhar. These connections facilitated opportunities for Ibn Nāṣīr’s students to teach at al-Azhar during their own pilgrimages. There, Nāṣīrī scholars like Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī and Ṭāb al-Mālik al-Tajmūʿatī taught their Egyptian peers. As Khaled El-Rouayheb has shown, their efforts, and those of other Moroccan scholars of this period, helped revive the study of logic in Egypt.

In *Islamic Intellectual History in the Seventeenth Century*, Khaled El-Rouayheb writes that, before the late 11th/17th century, the study of logic in Egypt was moribund. At that time, a group of Moroccan scholars succeeded in reviving the study of Islam’s rational sciences through the transmission of Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī’s logic-heavy theological works to Egyptian students. El-Sanūsī’s works had been in circulation in Morocco and much of North Africa for centuries but did not spread in Egypt and the Ottoman Empire until this period. El-Rouayheb identifies Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī as one of the more influential Moroccan scholars in Egypt during this period.

242 We discuss El-Rouayheb’s treatment of al-Hashtūkī and al-Yūsī below. al-Hashtūkī’s bio can be found in al-Makkī al-Nāṣīrī, *al-Durar*, v. 1, 131-143. For al-Yūsī see: Ibid., v. 1, 144-154. Al-Tajmūʿatī’s career is less documented.
244 Ibid., 188-9.
245 Ibid., 142-3.
He mentions that al-Hashtūkī taught both Aḥmad al-Mallawī and Aḥmad al-Jawharī who went on to become major logicians in Ottoman Egypt. El-Rouayheb also credits fellow Nāṣirī al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī with a similarly important role in Egyptian intellectual life. El-Rouayheb links al-Yūsī with two prominent Egyptian logicians from this period, Muḥammad al-Ḥasanī al-Bulaydī (d. 1176/1763), and Aḥmad al-Damanhūrī (d. 1192/1778). Additionally, El-Rouayheb dedicates a chapter of his book-length study to al-Yūsī’s works in logic and theology. He states that al-Yūsī’s works exemplified al-Sanūsī’s logic-based approach to Ashʿarī theology.

In addition to their contributions to the rational sciences, Nāṣirī scholars also made contributions to the transmitted sciences in Egypt and the Hijāz. This grew out of the Nāṣirīyya’s emphasis on reviving the Prophetic sunna and the study of ḥadīth. As noted, many of the books purchased by Ibn Nāṣir and Aḥmad al-Khalīfā were in the ḥadīth sciences. Similarly, we saw that Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī taught al-Bukhārī’s Sahīh collection of ḥadīth in Biskra. His rihla also contains information about another Nāṣirī scholar, the aforementioned ’Ābd al-Mālik al-Tajmūtī who made an impact in Egypt and the Hijaz as a ḥadīth scholar and jurist. al-Hashtūkī writes:

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246 Ibid., 133–5.
249 El-Rouayheb, Islamic Intellectual History, 204-231.
250 Ibid.
[al-Tajmū’atī] traveled to perform hajj at God’s sacred House and to visit the Prophet – peace be upon him – and he resided temporarily (jāwara) in Medina and Mecca. [There] he started to teach hadīth in the vicinity of the Prophet’s tomb and the Holy House. [Consequently], leading scholars from the Mālikī, Hanbalī, Ḥanafī and Shafi’ī schools acknowledged his prowess and requested his ijāza, which he gave them. He also [spent time] at the Azhar Mosque on his return from the Holy Cities, [where he taught] the sciences of hadīth and wisdom (al-mīzān).

He goes on to describe a question that al-Tajmū’atī received while teaching at al-Azhar regarding the proper protocol for the salaried imam at the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina. al-Hashtūkī records al-Tajmū’atī’s ensuing fatwa in full. He writes that this opinion was accepted by scholars at al-Azhar and quotes many of these positive responses. These endorsements show the overwhelming acceptance and appreciation of al-Tajmū’atī’s jurisprudence by leading Cairene scholars. Among them were locals Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Kharashī and ‘Abd al-Bāqī al-Zurqānī, as well as Moroccan émigrés Yaḥya al-Shāwī and Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Rūdānī.

Conclusion

The Nāṣirīyya’s stewardship of the hajj pilgrimage stands as one of its most unique contributions to religious life in Morocco and across North Africa. Centuries after Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ first sought to revive the hajj pilgrimage, Ibn Nāṣir stepped up during the Maraboutic Crisis to restore one of the essential pillars of Islamic practice in the region. In turn, his actions transformed the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood into one of the earliest transregional Sufi communities. While Nāṣirī affiliates along the hajj route were only loosely bound by their commitments to Ibn Nāṣir, this network was real. Nāṣirī

252 Ibid., folios 60-65.
pilgrims benefitted spiritually and materially from the brethren across North Africa, Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, these communities embraced the Nāṣīrī call, took direction from Nāṣīrī leaders and scholars, and, in many instances, sought to establish their own local Nāṣīrī traditions. What was the legacy of the Nāṣīrī hajj caravan? This chapter has shown how many Nāṣīrī affiliate communities remained active at least until the late 12th/18th century. These communities included scholars who produced texts supporting the Nāṣiriyya’s sunna-centric religious discourse. Furthermore, regions that were home to longlasting Nāṣīrī communities also gave rise to later Sufi revivalist communities. The region of ‘Ayn Māḍī and Abī Semghūn in the Northwest Sahara is home to Aḥmad al-Tijānī (d. 1230/1815) who founded the Tijāniyya Sufi brotherhood in the late 12th/18th century. The Libyan Desert was home to the Awlād Sīdī Nāṣīr, a Nāṣīrī affiliated tribe whose influence extended from Sirte to Ajdābiya. This area is where Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sanūsī (d. 1275/1859) was born and raised. He would go on to establish the Sanūsiyya Brotherhood in the early 13th/19th century. However, without further research, the relationship between the Nāṣirīyya and these later revivalist movements remains suggestive at best.
Appendix

Figure 4.8: Nāṣirī communities along the *hajj* route in the Northwest Sahara

*The star emblems represent local Nāṣirī delegates and the crescent emblems represent Nāṣirī affiliated Sufi lodges. Plain markers represent the presence of individual Nāṣirī adepts or families.*

**Figure 4.8 Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Longevity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[^254]: Ibid., 132, 723, 732.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bashshār</td>
<td>al-Hashtūkī mentions discussing <em>fiqh</em> here with adepts of Ibn Nāṣir.(^{255}) al-Khalīfa appoints <em>mugaddam</em> here in 1122/1710.(^{256})</td>
<td>11(^{th})/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th})/18(^{th}) centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figīg</td>
<td>Nāṣirī community led by Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, the city’s <em>qādī</em>.(^{257})</td>
<td>11(^{th})/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th})/18(^{th}) centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiyūt</td>
<td>Family of Nāṣirī adepts descending from Sīdī Abī Nuwwah, a companion of al-Khalīfa.(^{258})</td>
<td>Active in 1196/1782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abū Singhūn</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī adept al-Shaykh b. al-Murābiṭ al-Miftāḥī.(^{259})</td>
<td>Active in 1121/1709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The star emblems represent local Nāṣirī delegates and the crescent emblems represent Nāṣirī affiliated Sufi lodges. Plain markers represent the presence of individual Nāṣirī adepts or families.

**Figure 4.10 Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aghwāṭ</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī adept Aḥmad b. Yaḥya in 1121/1709.</td>
<td>Active in 1121/1709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awlād Jalāl</td>
<td>Significant Nāṣirī center that housed a madrasa for students from surrounding areas. (^{263})</td>
<td>11(^{th})/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th}/18(^{th}) centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biskra</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī adepts, including the city’s qāḍī and Imām of the congregational mosque. (^{264})</td>
<td>11(^{th}/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th}/18(^{th}) centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sīdī ’Uqba</td>
<td>Home to individual Nāṣirī adepts.</td>
<td>Active in 1196/1782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zarība</td>
<td>This area is home to the Awlād Sīdī Nājī clan whose eponym and patriarch embraced the Nāṣirīyya order in Ibn Nāṣir’s lifetime. Established at least one branch zāwiyya that maintained Nāṣirī rituals into the late 12(^{th}/18(^{th}) century. (^{265})</td>
<td>11(^{th}/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th}/18(^{th}) centuries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 4.10:** Nāṣirī communities along the Mediterranean Littoral (modern-day Tunisia and Libya)

The star emblems represent local Nāṣirī delegates and the crescent emblems represent Nāṣirī affiliated Sufi lodges. Plain markers represent the presence of individual Nāṣirī adepts or families.

**Figure 4.11 Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tūzur</th>
<th>Home to Nāṣirī adepts dating back to Ibn Nāṣir.(^{266}) al-Khālīfā describes transmitting Nāṣirī texts here in 1121/1709.(^{267}) Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām describes a Nāṣirī zāwiya near to here in 1196/1782.(^ {268})</th>
<th>11(^{th})/17(^{th}) – 12(^{th}/18(^{th}) centuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

\(^{266}\) Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshi meets one of Ibn Nāṣir’s adepts here. See *al-Riḥla al-ʿAyāshīyya*, v. 2, 536.


\(^{268}\) This is the zāwiya of Sīdi Muḥaddhib. See *al-Nāṣirī*, *al-Riḥla al-Nāṣirīyya al-Kubrā*, v. 1, 263.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Ḥāmma</td>
<td>Home to the zāwiya of Sīdī Ḥāmmah ʿAbd Allāh al-Majdhūb, a Sufi who took the Nāṣirī wīrūd from al-Khalīfā in 1122/1710.</td>
<td>12th/18th century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qābis</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī adepts dating back to Ibn Nāṣir, including Shaykh ʿAlī al-Nūrī and his sons.</td>
<td>11th/17th – 12th/18th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripoli and surrounding area</td>
<td>Large Nāṣirī community located in metropolitan Tripoli and along the coast, in cities like Tājūrā. Separate muqaddams were appointed for the coast and the city. Members of this community included Tripoli’s chief qāḍī, muftī and other scholars. Nāṣirī branch zāwiyas were located in surrounding areas.</td>
<td>11th/17th – 12th/18th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miṣrāta</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī adepts who receive a muqaddam in the 12th/18th century at the hands of Shaykh Yusuf al-Nāṣirī.</td>
<td>11th/17th – 12th/18th centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barqa Desert</td>
<td>The Awlād Sīdī Nāṣir clan were affiliated with the Nāṣiriyya and their presence extended from Sirte to Adjābiya.</td>
<td>12th/18th century</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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270 When passing through Tājūrā in 1121/1709, al-Khalīfā reports meeting a group of 64 Nāṣirī adepts, including 26 women. See al-Riḥla al-Nāṣiriyya, 194. Information on muqaddams for this region is found ibid., 732.
**Figure 4.11:** Nāṣirī Communities in Egypt and the Hijaz

The star emblems represent local Nāṣirī delegates and the crescent emblems represent Nāṣirī affiliated Sufi lodges. Plain markers represent the presence of individual Nāṣirī adepts or families.

**Figure 4.12 Key**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī community led by a <em>muqaddam.</em></td>
<td>12⁰/18⁰ century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairo</td>
<td>Home to Nāṣirī community dating from Ibn Nāṣir’s lifetime. al-Khalīfa appoints a <em>muqaddam</em> to oversee this group and its <em>zāwiya.</em></td>
<td>11⁰/17⁰ – 12⁰/18⁰ centuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecca</td>
<td>Home to many of Ibn Nāṣir’s companions, including Muhammad b. Sulaymān al-Rūdānī. Ibn ʿAbd al-</td>
<td>11⁰/17⁰ – 12⁰/18⁰ centuries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medina</th>
<th>Home to Nāṣirī community for whom al-Khalīfa appoints a <em>muqaddam</em> in 1121/1709. Commuity remained active into late 12th/18th century.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


Chapter 5:

The Naṣiriyya in the Sahara and Sahel

O you the mankind! Truly We have created you from a male and a female and We have made you into nations and tribes so that you may recognize one another. Truly the most graceful among you in the sight of Allah is one who reveres Him the most. Truly Allah is All-knowing, All-acquainted.

-Qur’an, 49:13

Introduction

Beginning in the second half of the 11th/17th century, the Naṣiriyya brotherhood began to spread in the burgeoning rural scholarly communities of the Western Sahara. At this time, the Western Sahara’s cultural geography was undergoing a dramatic transformation. Prior to the Sa’dī conquest of Timbuktu in 999/1590-1, Islamic scholarship in the Sahara and Sahel was dominated by the Songhay capital’s centralized, urban scholarly tradition. In the aftermath of its fall and the subsequent exile of its scholars, a new Saharan scholarly tradition began to coalesce in emerging caravan cities like Walāṭa, Wadān and Shinqīṭ and among the pastoral tribes of the Gebla and Ḥawḍ. This tradition was born out the discursive struggle between the fuqahā’ heirs of Timbuktu and new religious reformers like Naṣīr al-Dīn who challenged the authority of the sharī’a and its scholarly caretakers. The debate between these two camps was ultimately decided by the rise of the Banū Ḥassān Maghāfra clan, who defeated Naṣīr al-Dīn’s forces in the War of Shar Bubba in 1085/1674. The Maghāfra victory put an end to Naṣīr al-Dīn’s reformism and helped expand the gharāma system that designated the zawāyā tribes as tributaries of the Banū Ḥassān. As a result, the zawāyā turned their attention to developing the discursive tradition of the fuqahā’. The Naṣiriyya’s scholarly tradition and discourse of reverent love harmonized with the emergent class of Saharan fuqahā’ who
were looking for the discursive resources to assist them in mediating between the exigencies of Hassānī pastoral society and the authority of the kitāb and sunna. Nāṣirī scholars in Walāṭa and the Gebla helped shape the Saharan discursive tradition during the first half of the 12th/18th century and prepare for the emergence of new religious institutions such as the mahāzra system and communal Sufism.

The Fall of Timbuktu

Between the 8th/14th and late 10th/16th centuries, cultural life in the Sahara and Sahel flourished within the imperial political economy of the Malinke, and later Songhay, rulers of Timbuktu.¹ As the Southern terminus of the Trans-Saharan caravan trade in gold, salt and slaves,² Timbuktu was a prosperous, cosmopolitan metropolis and home to


a sophisticated and influential Islamic scholarly tradition. Timbuktu’s role as a cultural capital can be understood through its involvement in Trans-Saharan caravan commerce.\(^3\)

As Ghislane Lydon writes:

> Muslim religious practice, which promoted the acquisition of literacy, provided structure and agency that shaped the activities of Trans-Saharan traders. Concomitantly, the application of Islamic legal codes to business behavior enhanced commercial enterprise... The practice of Islam structured both the organization of long-distance caravan trade and the operation of trade networks. Muslim merchants and traders used their Arabic literacy and access to writing paper to draw contractual agreements and dispatch commercial correspondence, while depending on their mutual trust in God.\(^4\)

Timbuktu’s scholars were directly responsible for cultivating and maintaining this “paper economy of faith”\(^5\) in the Sahara and Sahel. Economic prosperity, in turn, supported the city’s scholars through the patronage of religious institutions and scholar’s salaries by merchants and military elites.\(^6\) Timbuktu’s scholars also enjoyed positions in the city’s civil administration. Saad writes that Timbuktu’s judges enjoyed “an acknowledged ascendency over the entire civilian population of the city.”\(^7\) These scholars, rather than the Songhay military rulers, were responsible for administering municipal affairs, arbitrating commercial disputes and resolving civil disputes. Likewise, the breadth of their learning gave them unparalleled status across Saharan and Sahelian communities.\(^8\)

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\(^3\) Kane writes that the economic prosperity of the Niger Bend region contributed to the rise of Timbuktu as a religious and scholarly center. See *Beyond Timbuktu*, 5.

\(^4\) Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, 3.


\(^6\) Saad, *Social History*, 22 and 89.

\(^7\) Saad, *Social History*, 95.

\(^8\) Saad, *Social History*, 158.
Timbuktu attracted students from across the region for studies or to travel with its annual hajj caravan to pursue academic opportunities in Egypt and other areas of the Middle East.  

The rise of Morocco’s Sa’dī dynasty, in the first half of the 10th/16th century, presented the Songhay empire with its first major geopolitical adversary. In line with their origins in Wādī Dar’a, Sa’dī leaders sought to exert their authority in the Sahara even prior to their defeat of the Waṭṭasid rulers of Fez. In 932/1526, Sa’dī forces invaded the Tuwāt Oases in the south of modern-day Algeria. In 951/1544, Muḥammad al-Shaykh al-Sa’dī launched a campaign to capture the lucrative Taghāza salt mines located halfway between Wādī Dar’a and Timbuktu. This campaign failed, leading the Touareg to launch a counterrattack on Dar’a. A decade later, Sa’dī forces campaigned in the area of Wadān and succeeded in assassinating the Songhay governor of Taghāza, resulting in the mine’s temporary abandonment. Sa’dī incursions in the Sahara intensified under Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s leadership. In 986/1578, he succeeded in annexing Taghāza and, in 998/1590, launched his famous campaign for the Songhay capital of Timbuktu. By virtue of their superior armament and organization, Moroccan forces swiftly defeated the Songhay army and captured Timbuktu in 999/1591.

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9 For a discussion of the impact of the hajj caravan from Timbuktu, known as the “takrūrī” caravan, see Ḥamāh Allāh. Wuld al-Sālim, Mūrītāniyyā fi al-dhākirah al-ʻArabiyya (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-ʻArabiyya, 2005), 81-8.
12 de la Chapelle, “Esquisse”, 78.
13 de la Chapelle, “Esquisse”, 78.
14 de la Chapelle, “Esquisse”, 79.
Under Moroccan rule, Timbuktu’s political economy changed drastically as the new Sa’dī rulers sought to capture revenues that had previously enriched local merchants. The city’s Moroccan administrators, known as the Arma,\(^{16}\) levied new taxes on the city’s mercantile class.\(^{17}\) Among those affected were many scholars who supported themselves through commercial activities. In protest against this and other oppressive policies by the city’s new rulers, Timbuktu’s scholars revolted in 1000/1592.\(^{18}\) This uprising failed and resulted in the exile of many of the city’s leading scholars to Morocco.\(^{19}\) This was an unprecedented disruption of Timbuktu’s scholarly tradition. As conflict between the Arma and Timbuktu’s civilian elite continued, many of the city’s remaining scholars chose to migrate to sedentary and pastoral communities in the Sahara. We see this in the biography of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sa’dī (d. 1066/1656), the author of Tarīkh al-Sudān. A native of Timbuktu, al-Sa’dī left the city as a young man shortly after the Sa’dī conquest to pursue a career as an itinerant scholar among the tribes of the Southern Sahara.\(^{20}\) Many of his peers chose similar paths. Shams al-Dīn b. al-Qādī (d.c. 11th/17th century), one of Timbuktu’s judges, relocated to Wadān in 1002/1593. Muḥammad al-Timbuktī (d.

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\(^{16}\) The name arma or ruma derives from the Arabic ṭūmūs or musketeers. This name was used locally to refer to the Moroccan soldiers assigned with administering captured Songhay territory for the Sa’dī Sultan in Marrakech. For a detailed discussion of the arma and their history, see John Ralph Willis, “The Western Sudan from the Moroccan Invasion (1591) to the Death of al-Mukhtar al-Kunti (1811),” in History of West Africa, ed. J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Harlow, England: Longman, 1985), 533-42.

\(^{17}\) Saad, Social History, 123.


\(^{19}\) Among these, was Ahmad Bābā al-Timbuktī (d. 1036/1627), whose scholarly prowess was celebrated in Marrakech. See Saad, Social History, 182. Upon returning to Timbuktu during the Maraboutic Crisis in 1016/1607, Ahmad Bābā’s story of trials and tribulation in Morocco was seen as a sign of the approaching end of time. See Wuld al-Sālim, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 92.

\(^{20}\) Wuld ‘Abd Allāh writes that al-Sa’dī’s vocation was as a reciter and commentator on Qādī ‘Iyād’s Kitāb al-Shifā’, skills that were especially in demand during the month of Ramadan. See al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 80.
1050/1640) moved to Walāta where he served as the caravan city’s chief judge until his death. Similarly, ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d. 1066/1655) became chief judge among the Barākna, a Banū Hassān tribe based along the Senegal River, to the West of Timbuktu.\footnote{Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, \textit{al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya}, 81.}

Heavy-handed Moroccan rule and scholarly diaspora led to a decline in Timbuktu’s literacy rates and general education levels.\footnote{Saad argues that the loss of special status for Timbuktu’s scholars and consequent mixing between the scholarly and unlettered classes led to a decline in its resident’s level of education. See \textit{Social History}, for 89, for his discussion of literacy and education in the late-Songhay period, and see 123ff for discussion of this decline.} This decline only worsened after Ahmad al-Mansur’s death in 1011/1603. As Morocco became embroiled in the Maraboutic Crisis, the Saʿdī military presence in the Sahara collapsed and Moroccan control over Timbuktu weakened. Though the \textit{Arma} initially maintained their loyalty to Marrakech, this changed after Mawlay Zaydān’s defeat by Ibn Abī Maḥallī in 1021/1612. In its aftermath, Jawdar \textit{pasha}, one of Timbuktu’s governors and the former leader of al-Manṣūr’s Saharan campaign, claimed control of the city’s governance, marginalizing the \textit{amīn}, the Saʿdī Sultan’s local representative.\footnote{Willis, “The Western Sudan”, 537.} Ties to the Saʿdī Sultan officially ended in 1041/1632 – five years after Mawlay Zaydān’s death in 1627/1037 – when Timbuktu’s \textit{pasha} began appointing an \textit{amīn} of his, and not Marrakech’s, choosing. By 1070/1660, preachers in Timbuktu and in the surrounding area had ceased praying for the Morocco’s Sultan during Friday prayers.\footnote{Willis, “The Western Sudan”, 537.} Wuld al-Sālim writes that despite the weakening of Saʿdī rule in Timbuktu, the \textit{Arma} and their descendants remained the most powerful political
force in the Western Saharan region until the 12th/18th century. However, as Timbuktu’s influence waned under Sa’dī and then Arma rule in the 11th/17th century, a fundamental sociopolitical transformation was culminating in the Sahara to the city’s West.

A. The Arabization of the Sahara

The 11th/17th century witnessed the culmination of the Western Sahara’s gradual social and linguistic Arabization. For centuries this territory – roughly equivalent to the modern state of Mauritania – had been inhabited by indigenous Berber populations and black African populations. However, beginning in the 6th/13th and 7th/14th centuries, the Banū Hassān, a branch of Arab Banū Ma’qil clan, began migrating into the Sahara from Southern Morocco. Their arrival initiated a gradual and profound process of social change in the Sahara. Since the Almoravid period, Saharan Berber and African clans had practiced a form of social specialization with distinct kinship groups specializing in different socioeconomic roles, such as herding, crafts and religious scholarship. The Banū Hassān were pastoralists, and their presence brought new and fierce competition for access to grazing lands, markets and other resources among Saharan pastoralists.

Additionally, the Banū Hassān had a penchant for militancy and frequently raided their

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25 Timbuktu submitted to Touareg influence after the Arma’s defeat by Touareg forces at Tadmakka 1150/1737. See Wuld ‘Abd Allāh, al-Haraka al-Fikriyya, 51; Willis, “The Western Sudan”, 542.
26 The “Western Sahara” here roughly refers to the corridor to the South of Morocco and North of Senegal that largely corresponds to the territory covered by the modern state of Mauritania.
challengers’ settlements and caravans. As a result, indigenous Saharan communities began entering into tributary relationships with the Banū Hassān where they provided money, goods or services to the Banū Hassān in exchange for military protection. In the 11th/17th century, these relationships were formalized.

In 1630/1040, the Maghāfra rose to dominate the Banū Hassān after defeating their rivals in battle. As a result, they imposed uniform levies on all of the Banū Hassān’s tributaries. Later, in the 1670s, the Maghāfra defeated the forces of the religious reformer Nāṣir al-Dīn (d. 1085/1674) in a conflict known as the war of Shar Bubba. Nāṣir al-Dīn was Berber and his supporters included members of many of the Sahara’s Berber tribes, known as the zawāyā. After their victory, the Maghāfra forced the zawāyā tribes to renounce arms and resume paying regular tribute to the Banū Ḥassān. As a result, many zawāyā communities began to sedentarize. This improved relations between the zawāyā and Banū Hassān which helped stimulate a revival in the regional caravan trade. Additionally, Charles Stewart writes that, at this time, Arabic literacy flourished among zawāyā communities as they began to specialize in Islamic scholarship to empower them as peaceful social mediators:

32 See Wuld ‘Abd Allāh’s discussion of the earliest mention of the zawāyā in al-Sa’di Ta’rīkh al-Sūdān in al-Haraka al-Fikriyya, 86.
33 Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*, 93ff. See also Stewart, *Islam and Social Order*, Ch. 3.
34 Cleaveland, *Becoming Walata* 15 and 191-3.
As the spiritual guardians of the society [the zawāyā] also conceived themselves as being bound to impose the discipline of Islamic law upon Hassanis, wherever possible. This is seen in their frequent participation in mediating disputes, acting as qadis for Hassani tribes, and occupying the position of spiritual counsellors to dominant Hassani figures.\textsuperscript{35}

These social factors encouraged the emergence of a new Saharan Islamic scholarly tradition based out of zawāyā communities. As scholars dispersed across the region, they worked to propagate Islamic norms and ethics as teachers, judges and commercial arbitrators. Towards the end of the 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century, a new Saharan-Sahelian political economy had emerged, based on a multi-nodal system of regional and transregional caravan commerce. Rather than supporting one major scholarly center, the new Saharan-Sahelian political economy of Islamic scholarship sustained a diffuse web of scholarly networks grounded in rural centers, such as Walāta, Tishīt and Taghāza. Newly self-governing Saharan-Sahelian communities provided ample demand for Muslim scholars to resolve conflicts and provide moral and social guidance in the absence of imperial administration. This movement closely resembles what occurred during Morocco’s Maraboutic Crisis. In both cases, social disorder stemming from the collapse of centralized political rule led to the migration of Islamic scholarship away from the city and into the countryside and desert. As in Morocco, these conditions led to unprecedented levels of educational and scholarly activity in rural areas, and eventually to the establishment of a distinct, rural scholarly tradition across the region.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{B. Religious Life in the Sahara (11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} centuries)}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{35} Stewart, \textit{Islam and Social Order}, 59.
After the fall of Timbuktu, the diffusion of Islamic scholarship across the Sahara and Sahel stimulated the emergence of new religious communities and institutions. Chief among them were Sufi brotherhoods. Prior to the end of the 11th/17th century, there is little evidence of organized, communal Sufism in the Sahara-Sahel. As Wuld al-Sālim writes, Timbuktu’s jurists opposed the development of Sufi traditions in the region. To represent this perspective, he paraphrases a fatwa from Ahmad Bābā al-Timbuktī:

In the midst of comparing Islamic law and Sufism, Aḥmad Bābā al-Timbuktī emphasizes the relationship between legal discourse and its practical, social application. In this way, he considers Islamic law (fiqh) as a body of knowledge that benefits the general populace. Whereas the benefit of spiritual knowledge (ʿilm al-taṣawwuf) is particular to the seeker (al-sālik) and no one else, even if its practitioner achieves its highest extent, which is the station of sainthood (wilāya).\textsuperscript{36}

In addition to their rhetorical opposition to Sufism, Timbuktu’s scholars also worked in concert with Songhay military power to curtail Sufi movements in the Sahel. We see this in the career of Sīdī Maḥmūd al-Baghdādī (d.c. early 10th/16th century). al-Baghdādī emerged as a religious reformer (mujaddid) in the Aīr Massif during the 10th/16th century. In response to his popular movement, Timbuktu’s scholars declared his teachings to be unlawful innovations (bidʿa)\textsuperscript{37} and they supported his persecution and eventual execution by the governor of Agades.\textsuperscript{38} Looking back on this history, Aḥmad Bābā endorsed the suppression of al-Baghdādī’s. In a fatwa explaining his opinion of students (jalaba) who spent their days remembering God (dhikr) and disapproved of traditional Islamic studies and engaging in normative acts of worship, Bābā responded by labeling them as

\textsuperscript{36} Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 77.
\textsuperscript{37} Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 78.
misguided and stated the need to “ostracize and fight them.” He also speculated, “that perhaps they are some of the remaining companions of the Innovator al-Baghdādī who was killed near to Agades at the beginning of the 10th/16th century.”

Due to this hostile climate, Sufi communities did not spread widely in the Sahara and Sahel until the 11th/17th century. The Qādiriyya brotherhood arrived in West Africa as early as the 8th/15th century at the hands of Aḥmad al-Bakkā’ī al-Kuntī (d.c. 10th/16th century) and Muḥammad b. Ṭabd al-Karīm al-Maghīlī (d. 909/1505). However, the brotherhood did not expand beyond the Kunta clan prior to the second half of the 12th/18th century. Similarly, Aḥmad Bābā taught Ibn Ṭatā’ Allāh’s Ḥikam in Timbuktu after his return from exile in Marrakech. However, there is no evidence that he worked to spread the Shādhiliyya brotherhood beyond his study circles. In the absence of organized Sufism, Wuld al-Sālim writes that the practice of Islamic spirituality in the Sahara-Sahel was limited to public recitations of Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ’s Kitāb al-Shifā’, Ṣahīḥ al-Bukhārī, praise poetry (mādiḥ) of the Prophet Muhammad and dhikr circles. He also writes that common people frequently sought out jurists (fuqahāʿ) for their prayers and blessings (tablarruk).

After the fall of Timbuktu in 999/1591, the city’s fuqahāʿ lost their control of the region’s discursive tradition. Consequently, new religious reforms movements emerged that challenged the status quo. The earliest of these was that of the mysterious Touareg

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42 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 77.
religious leaders “Ḥadāḥada” and “Ḥāmidū” in the Aïr Massif. Norris writes that both men came to the Aïr from Morocco and were responsible for leading movements against the local Sultan, Muḥammad al-Tafrija (r. 1033/1624/5 – 1064/1654), sometime between 1050/1640 and 1060/1650. Their movement included attacks against the Sultan’s territory and his capital in Agades. Norris also speculates their movement may have reached as far as Timbuktu. Two similar movements also appeared in the Western Sahara during this period. The first was Nāṣir al-Dīn’s aforementioned religious movement along the Senegal River, which climaxed with the War of Shar Bubba in the 1080s/1670s. Additionally, a certain “al-Imām al-Majdūb” lived contemporaneously to Nāṣir al-Dīn and was active in the city of Aṭār.

Nāṣir al-Dīn’s movement was predicated on a visionary, spiritual experience that occurred on ‘the Night of Power’ (laylat al-qadr) in Ramadan. According to his 12th/18th century biographer Muḥammad al-Yadālī (d. 1166/1753), Nāṣir al-Dīn was praying that night when God revealed to him the knowledge of people’s destinies: how long they would live, their provision and whether they would end up in Heaven or Hell. That morning, after receiving this inspired knowledge, Nāṣir al-Dīn announced that he would no longer pray behind several prominent scholars in the Gebla because he now knew them to be corrupt. This protest caused concern among the area’s religious elites. When a delegation of scholars confronted Nāṣir al-Dīn, they were surprised to find him both

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43 Norris, The Tuareg, 118-134; Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 92ff.
44 Norris, The Tuareg, 125.
45 Norris, The Tuareg, 129.
46 Norris, The Tuareg, 125.
48 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka, 101-2.
sincere and very knowledgeable. Gradually, his call gained support among religious elites and the general populace as his reputation for possessing special knowledge and piety spread. After three years, Nāṣir al-Dīn requested that his followers pledge allegiance (bay’a) to him as their imam. When the non-Muslim leaders in Senegambia refused to give Nāṣir al-Dīn their bay’a, he launched a jihād against them. He succeeded in conquering much of the Futa Toro region on the South side of the Senegal river, and installed his adepts there as his governors. Initially, Nāṣir al-Dīn enjoyed the tacit recognition of the Maghāfra tribes in the Gebla. Though they did not pledge allegiance to him, they did not move to censure his religious claims or curtail his movement’s expansion into Senegambia. However, when Nāṣir al-Dīn’s lieutenants demanded the Maghāfra pay their annual alms (zakāt) to him – an indication of their bay’a – they refused. Nāṣir al-Dīn then attacked them. He was killed during this campaign and his movement collapsed as it struggled to replace his visionary leadership.49

   al-Imām al-Majdhūb, Nāṣir al-Dīn’s contemporary, lived in Aṭār, a city in the Adrār region in the Northwest Sahara. al-Majdhūb was an unlettered man who had a visionary spiritual experience upon returning from ḥajj in 1085/1674. According to Wuld al-Sālim, al-Majdhūb had a vision where his hand became joined with the hand of Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Murādī al-Ḥaḍramī (489/1094), an Almoravid-era saint from Qayrawān who had died in the Sahara, near to Aṭār. After this experience, al-Majdhūb claimed to have gained the ability to write al-Ḥaḍramī’s words. He also claimed to know the location al-Ḥaḍramī’s grave, which was previously unknown. Eventually, al-Majdhūb’s congregation grew to overwhelm Aṭār’s residents and local government.50

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49 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 93-101.
50 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 101-3.
Majdūb’s main opponents were the scholars and judges of nearby Shinqīṭ. Muḥammad b. al-Mukhtar b. al-ʿAmash al-ʿAlawī (d. 1107/1696) was his fiercest opponent and accused him of disturbing public order and claiming to be a mahdī-type figure. In response to this rhetoric, al-Majdūb sent a copy of Kitāb al-Minna, the book he had composed with al-Ḥaḍramī’s words, along with some of his followers who were performing ḥajj. While in Cairo, they showed the book to the city’s main religious scholars, who endorsed and praised it. When news of their endorsement reach Aṭār, Ibn al-ʿAmash and his allies composed a rebuttal which they also sent to Cairo. Their argument convinced the scholars who had endorsed al-Majdūb to retract their support. To emphasize their change of heart, they sent Ibn al-ʿAmash their turbans in recognition of his scholarly stature.

Each of these movements shared the objective of reforming horizontally oriented societies through the establishment of a vertically oriented political authority. As Wuld al-Sālim writes, all of these reformers advocated for an “imamate” model of religio-political authority against the secular or irreligious Saharan tribal regimes, who enjoyed the support of local fuqaha’. These movements were united in their view that an enlightened imām was more suitable due to his piety and special knowledge. They sought to earn the pledge of allegiance (bayʿa) of their communities and nearby political leaders. Those who refused to give bayʿa were then targeted through jihād because an Imamate system demands obedience to the imām, who serves as God’s deputy on Earth (khalīfa).

Nāṣir al-Dīn’s movement found tremendous success mobilizing Muslims in Senegambia

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51 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 102.
52 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 112-3.
53 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya, 70.
to engage in *jihād* against their non-Muslim rulers.\(^{54}\) In the case of Ḥadāḥada and Ḥāmidtū, their critics labeled them as ‘holy warriors’ (*mujāhidūn*) who considered the local Sultan, al-Tafrīja, to be an illegitimate ruler.\(^{55}\) They were also accused of declaring the local Muslim community to be non-believers (*takfīr*).\(^{56}\) These religious leaders also all sought to gain the allegiance (*bayʿa*) of their communities and the surrounding areas. This was the genesis of the conflict between Nāṣir al-Dīn and the Maghāfra. Initially, Maghāfra leaders recognized the legitimacy of Nāṣir al-Dīn’s movement. However, once he demanded they pay alms (*zakāt*) to him, indicating their submission to his religio-political authority, conflict broke out.\(^{57}\)

Wuld al-Sālim argues these movements can also be understood as manifestations of the conflict between revealed knowledge (*kashf*) and Islamic law (*sharīʿa*).\(^{58}\) All these movements emerged in sociopolitical environments governed by the *sharīʿa*. The appearance of an *imam* figure challenged the authority of the *sharīʿa* and the political systems it supported. Under an Imamate system, the enlightened *imam* possessed supreme authority due to his intimate relationship with God and access to Divine inspiration. This special knowledge – direct from the Divine presence – had the potential to override established *sharīʿa* norms. In this way, the figure of the enlightened *imam* posed an acute threat to the established systems of religio-political authority in the Sahara-Sahel during this period. We see this in Nāṣir al-Dīn’s public refusal to pray

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\(^{54}\) Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Ḥaraka*, 94-5.

\(^{55}\) Norris, *The Tuaregs*, 128.

\(^{56}\) Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya*, 93. The Arabic text cited by Wuld ʿAbd Allāh clarifies Norris’ translation of line 6, which should read, “they declared the *jamāʿa* of Islam to be non-believers.” See Norris, *The Tuareg*, Appendix.

\(^{57}\) Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya*, 105.

\(^{58}\) Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya*, 107ff.
behind prominent scholars in the Gebla. This protest undermined the *sharīʿa*, which requires Muslims to pray behind an *imām* without consideration for their inward state. It also undermined the individual scholars’ authority by raising doubts about their piety. Furthermore, the followers of Nāṣir al-Dīn and al-Imām al-Majdhūb celebrated their lack of formal religious education as well as their engagement in *jihad*. Like Aḥmad Bābā, many Saharan *fuqahāʾ* saw these movements not only as threats to the social order, but also as undermining the very practice of Islamic knowledge in the Sahara. These scholars’ challenge and engagement with these movements provided the discursive focal point around which a new, Saharan Islamic scholarly tradition emerged.

The *fuqahāʾ* who opposed Nāṣir al-Dīn and al-Imām al-Majdhūb disapproved of their use of inspired knowledge (*kashf*) to abrogate *sharīʿa* norms. In a legal opinion, Ibn Hāshim al-Qalāwī (d. 1098/1687) states his support for Ibn al-ʿAmash’s condemnation of those who publicized *kashf*-derived knowledge. Later, he equates figures like Nāṣir al-Dīn and al-Imām al-Majdhūb to atheists (*zanādiqa*) who were equivalent to non-believers and who deserved to be punished without being given the opportunity to repent. He writes:

In sum, the decisive position and the consensus of the previous generations is that there is no way to know (*maʿrifā*) God the Most High’s judgments related to His commandments and prohibitions except by way of the Messengers. Whoever says that there is another way by which he can know God’s commandments and prohibitions, then he is a non-believer (*kāfir*) who should be killed without being given the opportunity to repent. This is because such a person is declaring the existence of a prophet after [the Prophet Muhammad], peace be upon him. That is so because whoever says that they follow what is in their heart, and that [this knowledge] is God’s judgment, and that they have no need for a *sunna* or a book, then such a person is declaring their own prophethood.  

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Ibn Ḥāshim and his colleagues framed their opposition to these reform movements in theological terms. They argued that these leaders either did not understand, were not aware, or did not care that their claims represented a challenge to the established doctrines of Prophethood. Their followers, who were largely uneducated, knew even less and could not discriminate between the truth and falsehood in the Imamate leaders’ claims. Consequently, Saharan fuqahā’ worked together during this period to cultivate the study of Ashʿarī theology to counter these kashf-based movements.

Wuld ʿAbd Allāh writes that prior to the 11th/17th century, Ashʿarī theology was not commonly taught in the Sahara. Rather, scholars in that region relied on the Risāla of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī. In 1066/1656, ʿAbd Allāh al-Būḥasanī departed the Sahara to perform ḥajj. al-Būḥasanī, who was from the Gebla and a fierce opponent of Nāṣir al-Dīn, had named al-Būḥasanī among the area’s corrupt imams. While in the Middle East, al-Būḥasanī acquired a copy of Iḍā’at al-Dajna, a didactic poem on Ashʿarī theology by the Moroccan scholar Aḥmad al-Maqarrī (d. 1041/1632). Upon his return to the Gebla, al-Būḥasanī wrote to his colleague Ibn al-ʿAmash al-Shinqīṭī and requested that he write a commentary on al-Maqarrī’s text. Ibn al-Aʿmash accepted al-Būḥasanī’s invitation and composed a work entitled Futūḥat dīl al-Raḥma wa-l-Minna fī Sharḥ Iḍā’at al-Dujunna. This work was then abridged by Ibn Hāshim al-Qalāwī who entitled his work

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61 Ibn Abī Zayd followed the atharī school of theology, which predated the formation of the Ashʿarī school. While there is evidence that Aḥmad Bābā and other Timbuktu scholars studied and commented on the works of the Ashʿarī theologian Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, these works were not influential. See Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Haraka al-Fikriyya, 115.
\textit{al-ʿAqidah al-Ghallāwiyya}. These works established Ash’arī theology within the Saharan teaching curriculum and were commented upon by the next generation of Saharan fuqahā\textsuperscript{65}. Also around the end of the 11\textsuperscript{th}/17\textsuperscript{th} century, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Ṣanūṣī’s works on Ash’arī theology began to circulate in Saharan circles. In this discursive environment, we find the earliest evidence of the Nāṣirīyya’s spread into the Sahara.

The earliest documented example of Nāṣirī scholarly travel to the Sahara can be found in the career of Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī who served as chief judge in Taghāza during the 1080s-1090s/1670s-1680s.\textsuperscript{66} al-Hashtūkī arrived in Taghāza sometime after receiving his final \textit{ijāza} from al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī in Jumādā II, 1084/September, 1673.\textsuperscript{67} In this document, al-Yūsī authorizes al-Hashtūkī to “teach, dictate and compose” works in all of the fields al-Yūsī himself had mastered, granting him his “complete, unlimited and total permission” to do so. He urges al-Hashtūkī “to benefit those seeking knowledge, and to spread knowledge and wisdom among the Muslims”. al-Yūsī then reminds al-Hashtūkī of his duty to “be very thorough in grounding his transmission and understanding, to make himself sincere in spreading knowledge for God’s sake, and to grant me [i.e., al-Yusi] a share in his pious supplications and profitable business.”\textsuperscript{68} al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī describes al-Hashtūkī’s sojourn in Taghāza as the capstone of his education:

\textsuperscript{64} Wuld ‘Abd Allāh, \textit{al-Ḥaraka al-Fikriyya}, 116; Stewart and Wuld Ahmed Salim, \textit{The Writings of Mauritania}, 631.


\textsuperscript{66} Muhammad al-Ḥabīb Nūḥī notes that Taghāza is located exactly a 20 day camel journey from both Darʾa and Timbuktu. See al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, \textit{al-Durar}, v. 1, 138, nt. 139.


After [completing his elementary education], God blessed [al-Hashtūkī] with openings until he became a mufīḥ and became the chief judge in Taghāţa in bilād al-Sudan. There, he procured great wealth. Many of that region’s scholars studied with him and he gave them his ijāza. He was respected, admired and honored by them.\(^{69}\)

There is no record of how al-Hashtūkī was appointed to his judgeship.\(^{70}\) It is possible that al-Hashtūkī traveled to Taghāţa, immediately in 1084/1673, as a teacher and to engage in caravan commerce, and then later became a judge, possibly at the hands of a local ruler. However, all that we can say for certain is that he was in Taghāţa long enough to establish himself as a respected scholar and amass a considerable fortune before he left the city to perform ḥajj in 1096/1685.\(^{71}\)

Our main source of al-Hashtūkī’s scholarly career in Taghāţa is his academic autobiography (fahrasa) entitled Qirā al-ʿAjlan ʿala Ijāzat al-Aḥibba wa-l-Ikhwān.\(^{72}\) al-Hashtūkī composed this work while in Cairo on his return from ḥajj, in 1097/1686, at the insistence of a group of scholars from the Gebla, Sijilmāsa, Tuwāt, Darʾa, the Sahel and West Africa.\(^{73}\) al-Hashtūkī used this opportunity to record his academic autobiography.

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\(^{70}\) Mawlay Ismāʿīl began exerting political influence over the Sahara in the 1080s/1670s, and gained allegiance of the Banu Hassan tribes by 1089/1678-9. However, it is not clear whether the allegiance of pastoralist tribes would have translated into influence over a settlement such as Taghāţa, which, at this time, was home to a thriving salt trade. Furthermore, Abitbol notes that Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s relations with the Sahara were interrupted by the rebellions of Muhammad al-ʿĀlim and Ibn Muḥriz, both of whom based their insurrections in Southern Morocco. It was not until 1089/1687 until Mawlay Ismāʿīl installed a garrison in the area, but not in Taghāţa. And though a letter between Mawlay Ismāʿīl and his governor al-Maʾmūn discusses Taghāţa, al-Maʾmūn’s appointment to this position occurred only in 1111/1700 and lasted for two years. See Abitbol, “Le Maroc et le commerce transsaharien”, 7ff. See also discussion by Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Istiṣʿāḥ', v. 7, 89ff.


He dedicates the first section of his work to listing the students and texts he taught in Taghāza. In total, he lists 32 scholars he taught, likely in his majlis in the Abū Zakarīyā mosque. Among these were travelers and émigrés from Morocco’s Tāfilālt and Sūs regions as well as from Tuwāṭ, Shinqūṭ, the Gebla and Timbuktu. While there is no record that al-Hashtūkī inducted any of his students into the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood, his successful career provides the earliest evidence of how the Nāṣirīyya provided Saharan scholars with access to much needed discursive resources. The texts that al-Hashtūkī taught in Taghāza reflect the core of the Nāṣirī discursive tradition. These included Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and the Ḥikam of Ibn Ṭāṭ Alī Allāh and its commentary by Ibn Ṭabbād al-Rundī. In the field of ʿaqīda, al-Hashtūkī writes that he taught al-Sanūsī’s Kubrā and, in at least one instance, transmitted al-Yūsī’s commentaries on this text along with his own notes of al-Yūsī’s lessons in this discipline.

al-Hashtūkī provides further illustration of this discursive harmony in an episode recorded at the beginning of his ḥajj diary. He writes that on the day of his departure, he met with a certain al-Sharīf Zayn al-Ṭābiʿīn al-Salmānī who posed a number of legal questions to al-Hashtūkī. However, al-Hashtūkī demurred due to his impending travel. As an alternative, he advised al-Salmānī to seek out the aforementioned Ibn al-ʿAmash al-Shinqūṭī:

As I set out from the qaṣaba, the sharīf Zayn al-Ṭābiʿīn al-Salmānī met me bearing numerous questions, which I directed to the eminent scholar, the ocean, who possesses great understand [al-ʿĀlim al-ʿAllāmah al-Bahr al-Fāḥāmah] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Sīdī Muḥammad b. al-ʿAmash al-Shinqūṭī – may God grant us and him the greatest extent of our pleas and hopes. In turn, he asked us to answer the questions and requested that I compose a commentary on his didactic poem on

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logic, which addresses topics covered in *shaykh* 'Abd Allāh al-Sanūsī’s *mukhtāṣar* \(^{78}\) as well as topics from the *Shamsiya*.\(^{79}\)

This represents the earliest evidence of collaboration between Nāširī scholars and their Saharan counterparts.

*The Emergence of Organized Sufism in the Sahara: The Nāširīyya Brotherhood*

During the second half of the 11\(^{th}\)/17\(^{th}\) century, contact between the Sahara and Morocco intensified as the movement of peoples between the two regions began to revive. The end of the War of Shurr Bubba and the Maraboutic Crisis brought stability to Saharan and Moroccan society respectively. Trade was one aspect of this mobility. While it is unclear how the fall of Timbuktu and increased European trading activity along the Sahara’s Atlantic coast impacted the Trans-Saharan caravan trade, it is clear that caravan routes between Timbuktu, Saharan cities like Walāta and Shinqīṭ, and Wādī Dar’a and Sijilmāsa in Morocco remained active during the 17\(^{th}\) and early 18\(^{th}\) centuries.\(^{80}\) However, the revival of the overland *hajj* pilgrimage was even more important in facilitating scholarly travel and the exchange of ideas over this area. As we saw above, ‘ʿAbd Allāh al-Būḥasāṇī performed *hajj* in 1066/1656 and al-Imām al-Majdhūb did so in 1085/1674.

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\(^{78}\) This is likely a reference to al-Sanūsī’s work *Sullam al-Marawnaq.*


\(^{80}\) Wuld ‘ʿAbd Allāh describes the shift in regional trade from a Trans-Saharan to an Atlantic focus as a gradual one. Trade with Europeans on the Atlantic coast appears to have picked up after France came into possession of St. Louis on the Senegal River in 1137/1724. This led to an increase in the trade in gum Arabic, which was harvested exclusively for export to Europe, not for consumption in the Maghrib. See Wuld ‘ʿAbd Allāh, *al-Haraka al-Fikriyya*, 52-54. See also James L. A. Webb Jr, “The Mid-eighteenth Century Gum Arabic Trade and the British Conquest of Saint-Louis Du Senegal, 1758,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 1 (January 1, 1997): 37–58.
While previous generations of Saharan pilgrims had performed ḥajj with the Songhay caravan that departed annually from Timbuktu, in the 11th/17th century, pilgrim traffic from the Sahara shifted towards Sijilmāsa to the North.

The rise of the ʿAlawī dynasty in Morocco also encouraged stability and transregional mobility. The second ʿAlawī sultan, Mawlay Ismāʿīl, sought to expand his influence in the Sahara not through military invasion but by forging alliances with local Banū Ḥassān tribes. The purpose of these alliances was to secure Trans-Saharan trade routes. In 1098/1687, Mawlay Ismāʿīl sought to enhance this security by installing a Moroccan garrison at Taoudenni, a salt mine along the Sijilmāsa-Timbuktu caravan route. According to Abitbol, Mawlay Ismāʿīl attempted to obtain the allegiance of the Moroccan arma who ruled Timbuktu in 1100/1689 or 1101/1690, but failed. Due to the limits of ʿAlawī influence in the Sahara, Mawlay Ismāʿīl’s efforts did not disrupt the emergent Saharan-Sahelian caravan economy in the same way that Aḥmad al-Manṣūr’s conquest of Timbuktu had done less than a century prior.

The revival of transregional mobility brought Saharan scholars into contact with the Nāṣiriyya, whose community was firmly rooted across the Sūs, Wādī Darʿa and Tāflālt by the 1080s/1670s. It is not surprising that this contact was fruitful. The sociopolitical and discursive challenges Ibn Nāṣir and his students faced during the Maraboutic Crisis were very similar to those of their Saharan colleagues. Ibn Nāṣir and his students served as social mediators and enforcers of the sharīʿa much like the zawāyā

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81 Abitbol writes that by 1678-9, Mawlay Ismāʿīl had gained the allegiance of all Banū Hassān tribes from Wād Ṣūn, the Southern boundary of Morocco’s Sūs region, to the Senegal River. See Abitbol, “Le Maroc et le commerce transsaharien”, 8.
82 Taoudenni was located in the vicinity of Taghāza, which it eventually replaced as a salt-producing center. See: McDougall, “Salts of the Western Sahara”, 251-3.
A. Early Nāṣirī Expansion in the Sahara

Over the course of the 12th/18th century, the Nāṣirīyya took root within five of the Sahara’s most prominent zawāyā tribes. The first were the Bārattayl, whose members included prominent religious scholars ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ al-Bartallī (d. 1196/1782) and Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq al-Bartallī (d. 1212/1798), the author of Fath al-Shakūr. Both of these men and their clanmates lived in and around Walāta, a prominent caravan center in the eastern Ḥawḍ region. Walāta’s history as a Nāṣirī center will be examined in detail below. The second prominent Nāṣirī community was the Idaw Dāy (al-Yadālī) tribe located in the Trārza region. Led by Nukhtār b. Muṣṭafā (d.c. 12th/18th century) and Muḥammad al-Yadālī (d. 1166/1753), this community continued to transmit the Nāṣirī sanad into the 19th century. The Nāṣirīyya also spread in the Adrār in the...
Northern Sahara among the Idaw ʿAlī and Idaw al-Ḥājj clans. It also spread among the Tandghah zāwiya tribe.⁸⁴

The Trans-Saharan caravan trade may have served as an early means for the Nāṣiriyya’s spread among Saharan communities. As we discussed in Chapter 2, commerce was an important aspect of the Nāṣiriyya’s social mission. There is a distinct possibility that Saharan traders would have come to know Ibn Nāṣir through his role as a commercial adjudicator and the Nāṣiriyya’s broader role facilitating caravan traffic through Wādī Dar’a. However, it is unclear to what degree the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood engaged in long-distance trade during the 11th/17th century. The prevailing image of the Nāṣiriyya’s involvement in Trans-Saharan trade comes from Depont and Coppolani, who depict the Nāṣiriyya as possessing two broad zones of influence over the Trans-Saharan trade. The first of these covered the East - West caravan routes that connected the Tuwāt oases with the port city of Agādīr in the Sus. The second zone accorded with the North – South commercial axis that linked Sijilmāsa with Timbuktu.⁸⁵ According to Depont and Coppolani, the Nāṣirīyya coordinated caravan trade through branch zāwiyas located along these trade routes. They also mention that members of the Nāṣirīyya traveled freely and safely across this area. Despite providing these details, Depont and Coppolani do not provide the history of how the Nāṣirīyya’s trading activities developed over the course of the 11th/17th – 14th/19th centuries.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Wuld Ākāh, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādiliyya, 164-5.
⁸⁵ Coppolani and Depont, Les confréries religieuses musulmanes, 479-81.
⁸⁶ Based on Depont and Coppolani’s analysis, many secondary studies of the Nāṣirīyya emphasize the brotherhood’s role in coordinating caravan commerce. See Spillman, Esquisse, 196-7; Marcel Bodin, “La Zaouia de Tamegrout,” Les archives berbères 3, no. 4 (1918): 287-9; Gutelius, “Between God and Men”, 93-4; Gutelius, “The Path is Easy”, 33-4. Despite these claims, there is very limited primary source evidence for the Nāṣirīyya’s involvement in the Trans-Saharan caravan commerce during this period.
In contrast to the extensive support network established by Maḥammad b. Nāṣir to support the Nāṣiriyya’s stewardship of the overland *hajj* pilgrimage, there is little evidence of the Nāṣiriyya’s spread into the Sahara before its founder’s death in 1085/1674. None of Ibn Nasir’s biographers mention any report related to the Sahara or Sahel. Furthermore, the *Ajwiba* contains no legal opinions concerning long-distance trade. Rather, its treatment of commerce is limited to local business dealings. Sources from Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s lifetime document the Nāṣirīyya’s presence in the Sahara via the *hajj* pilgrimage and scholarly travel but are vague about the brotherhood’s involvement in long-distance trade. The lack of other corroborating evidence –

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87 Locations identified by Depont and Coppolani, also Spillman, *Fath al-Shakīr* and *al-Durar al-Murassa‘a*.

88 The biography of al-Khalīfa’s student Aḥmad al-Shāwī includes a story of al-Shāwī’s request for al-Khalīfa’s spiritual protection before embarking on a caravan trip to Timbuktu. See *al-Durra al-Jalīla*, v. 2, 339. There is also a story in Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣiri’s *Ṭal‘at al-Mushtarī* about a certain ʿAlī al-Sūfī whose affiliation with the Nāṣirīyya saved him from abuse at the
correspondence, trade records, additional biographical reports – implies that the Nāṣiriyya’s engagement in long-distance caravan commerce remained limited in comparison to their involvement in other forms of transregional mobility.

We find evidence of Saharan scholars traveling northward to study in Nāṣirī centers in the Sūs, Dar’a and Tafilelt in the last decades of the 17th century. Historian Muhammad Ḥajjī writes that Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Wāfī al-Ghallāwī (d. 1713/1125) was the first of these to enter the Nāṣirīyya order at the hands of Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Tastāwutī, sometime at the end of the 11th/17th century. Around the same period, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. al-Qāḍī al-ʿAlawī al-Shinqīṭī (d. 1142/1730 or 1144/1732) traveled to Tārūdant during Muḥammad al-ʿĀlim al-ʿAlawī’s revolt between 1703-5/1114-1116. Muḥammad al-ʿĀlim enjoyed the support of local Nāṣirī scholars in the Sus and it is possible that al-ʿAlawī was influenced by Nāṣirī discourse, though his formal affiliation with the brotherhood is unknown. However, it was with the Walātī scholar Abū Bakr b. ʿĪsā al-Ghallāwī’s (d. 1146/1734) ḥajj pilgrimage in 1120/1709 that we see the development of a pattern of scholarly mobility between Saharan scholarly communities and Nāṣirī centers.

hands of the Awlād Dalīm tribe, a branch of the Banū Hassān that was also affiliated with the Nāṣiriyya. See al-Nāṣirī, Ṭalʿat al-Mustarīrī, v. 2, 105-6. This story is cited by Bodin and later scholars to support their arguments about the Nāṣiriyya’s involvement in Trans-Saharan caravan commerce.


90 Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, al-Ḥaraka al-Fikrīyya, 57.

The primary means for the Nāṣirīyya’s spread in the Sahara was their stewardship of the overland ḥajj, beginning in the 1070s/1660s. By this period, Sijilmāsa was a major Nāṣīrī center and scholars affiliated with the brotherhood occupied prominent positions as judges and jurisconsults in the city. We find that some of the earliest examples of the Nāṣirīyya’s spread into the Sahara occurred through the ḥajj pilgrimage. This connection grew even stronger in the mid-12th/18th century with the career of Aḥmad al-Ḥabīb al-Lamṭī (d. 1165/1751). A master of Qur’anic psalmody, al-Lamṭī’s influence spread widely in the Sahara through his student ’Abd Allah b. Abī Bakr al-Tanwājīwī (d. 1145/1733). al-Lamṭī is also credited with inducting a number of other prominent Saharan scholars into the Nāṣirīyya order through his position on the overland ḥajj route.

B. Nāṣīrī Scholars in Walāṭa

The Nāṣirīyya’s first sustained home in the Sahara was Walāṭa, a caravan center located in the eastern Ḥawḍ region, due West of Timbuktu. Our main source of information on the Nāṣirīyya in Walāṭa is Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Bartallī’s (d. 1220/1805) Fath al-Shakūr fī Ma’ rifat A ḵyān ‘Ulamā’ al-Takrūr. al-Bartallī was a Nāṣīrī and his texts document the phases of the brotherhood’s development in the city. After its initial transmission at the hands of itinerant Nāṣīrī scholars from Morocco, the brotherhood took root among Walāṭa’s scholarly class, who integrated themselves into the Nāṣirīyya’s transregional networks. Before long, Walāṭī scholars regularly traveled to Morocco to perform ḥajj with the Nāṣīrī caravan or to study with Nāṣīrī scholars in Tamgrut and Sijilmasa.

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92 For a detailed study of Walāṭa’s history, see Timothy Cleaveland, Becoming Walāṭa : A History of Saharan Social Formation and Transformation (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002).
The first Walātī scholar to embrace the Nāṣirīyya was likely Aḥmad b. ʿAlī al-Wāfi al-Ghallāwī (d. 1713/1125), a pious jurist who took the Nāṣirī wīrd from Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tastāwuṭī, sometime towards the end of the 11th/17th century. Aḥmad b. ʿAli’s brief biography in Fath al-Shakūr suggests his role in guiding his main student, al-Ṭālib al-Amīn al-Ḥarashī, to seek al-Tastāwuṭī’s student Aḥmad al-Tuwāṭī (d. 1138/1725-6) to be inducted into the Nāṣirī order. Fath al-Shakūr describes al-Tuwāṭī as a pious and well-educated man:

[al-Tuwāṭī’s] daily litany (wīrd) was the ‘ransom remembrance’ (fidyat al-dhikr) of 70,000 mentions of “There is no God but God” and “Muhammad is the Messenger of God”, peace be upon him. [It was his custom] to go out into seclusion in the mid-morning until he had finished it. Upon completing the litany, he would return home and read books. He would then converse with his family [in the evening] before going to sleep. [al-Tuwāṭī] preoccupied himself with Sufism, and [one] could find many books of Sufism in his library.94

al-Bartallī then records al-Tuwāṭī’s sanad in the Nāṣirī brotherhood:

[al-Tuwāṭī] took the Nāṣirīyya-Ghāziyya path in Sufism from his shaykh, [Aḥmad b.] ʿAbd al-Qādir [al-Tastāwuṭī], [who took the path] from al-Shaykh Sīdī Maḥammad b. Nāṣīr.95

While al-Bartallī credits al-Tuwāṭī with inducting “countless” numbers of Western Saharans into the Nāṣirīyya, his most important students were al-Ṭālib al-Amīn al-Ḥarashī (d. 1166/1753) and Muḥammad b. al-Ṭālib ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ (d. 1165/1752).96 A third important Walātī Nasiri scholar was Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥājjī Ḥsā al-Ghallāwī (d. 1146/1734) who performed the ḥajj pilgrimage with Aḥmad al-Khālīfa 1709/1120.

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93 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥaji, 14.
95 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 83-4.
96 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 123ff and 229-30.
Already an accomplished scholar, al-Ghallawī dedicated himself to learning from al-Khalīfa during their pilgrimage and took the Nāṣirī wīrd from him.\(^97\)

The biographies of al-Ghallawī, al-Ṭālib al-Amīn and Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ illustrate the commonality between the Nāṣiriyya’s expression among Saharan scholars and their Moroccan counterparts. Each of these scholars occupied positions of prominence in Walāta’s judicial and educational systems. al-Ghallawī was known as “little Mālik [b. Anas]” due to his virtue as a judge. He taught the Muktasār of Khalīl b. Ishāq to many of Walāta’s aspiring jurists in the late 11\(^{th}\)/17\(^{th}\) and early 12\(^{th}\)/18\(^{th}\) centuries, and was recognized as an insightful mufti.\(^98\) His students al-Ṭālib al-Amīn and al-Khaṭṭāṭ followed this example. al-Khaṭṭāṭ served as a mufti in addition to teaching a range of disciplines, including mathematics and the esoteric sciences (ʿilm al-sīr), for which he was best known.\(^99\) al-Bartallī, who studied with both al-Khaṭṭāṭ and al-Ṭālib al-Amīn, describes the latter as outstanding and peerless in all of the Takrūr region.\(^100\) Due to the number and prominence of his students, al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s name is one of the most mentioned in Fath al-Shakūr.

Additionally, these men’s involvement in the transmission, reproduction and composition of scholarly texts closely reflects the Nāṣiriyya’s promotion of literacy and erudition. al-Bartallī writes that Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ “spent his life teaching and learning, as well as reading, commentating on and discussing books.”\(^101\)

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\(^97\) al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 141-2.
\(^98\) al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 140-1.
\(^99\) al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥaǧjī, 127.
\(^100\) al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 124. Wuld ʿAbd Allāh describes al-Ṭālib al-Amīn as Walāta’s “most prominent teacher and most important scholarly figure” of the early [12\(^{th}\)]/18\(^{th}\) century. See Ibid., 123-4, nt. 7.
\(^101\) al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥaǧjī, 127.
eight of al-Khaṭṭāt’s scholarly works in addition to numerous poems and proverbs. These works included didactic poems in jurisprudence, mathematics and astronomy, along with a collection of fiqh responsa and an introductory text in theology.\textsuperscript{102} al-Bartallī writes similarly about al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s scholarly practice: “[He] always spent his nights in prayer and filled his time with commenting on and copying texts. [He also filled his time] with caring for his fellow Muslims’ needs and reading books.”\textsuperscript{103} He also describes al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s handwriting as having been both beautiful and unique, and adds that many people benefitted through it from the books he composed and copied.\textsuperscript{104}

\textbf{Figure 5.2:} An excerpt from a poem by Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāt praising the Prophet Muḥammad, copied by a later scholar.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{102} al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 128.

\textsuperscript{103} al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 64.

\textsuperscript{104} al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 64.

\textsuperscript{105} Muḥammad b. al-Ṭālib b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāt, “Naẓm Shiʿī Fī Madḥ Al-Nabī” (1839), Arabe 5669, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b90657354, 126a-130a. According to AMMS, this manuscript was originally located in Segou: “Naẓm Shiʿī fī Madḥ al-Nabī,” West African Arabic
Lastly, al-Bartallī’s description of these scholars’ religious practice and piety indicates their adoption of the Nāsirīyya’s religious discourse. He describes his beloved teacher, al-Ṭālib al-Amīn, as a scrupulous observer of the Prophetic sunna, a characteristic which set him apart from his contemporaries. He relates this to al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s role in maintaining communal prayer in Walāta’s central mosque. He writes that, when al-Ṭālib al-Amīn died, people were heard saying, “Today, the mosque has been orphaned.” al-Bartallī also describes his struggles to maintain communal observance of certain supererogatory prayers, such as the prayer during an eclipse and for rain: “I saw him go out to pray for rain several times with only two or three other men. He would pass by large groups of people and call them to join him, but no one, save one or two, would heed his call.”

We find parallels to al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s religious practice in the biographies of al-Ghallāwī and al-Khaṭṭātī. al-Bartallī identifies al-Ghallāwī’s piety with his honesty and uprightness:

[al-Ghallāwī] stood strongly with the Truth and upheld the duty of commanding right and forbidding wrong. He did not fear any critic’s reproach and was not shy to tell the Truth. One day the leader of a tribe came to him to testify to something and he impugned and rejected his testimony. [al-Ghallāwī] had a strong heart and intrepidly undertook grave matters. He was also bold in his opposition to oppressive rulers and bandits. His prayers (duʿāʾ) were known to be answered, and so they esteemed and obeyed him, doing as he wished.
Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ is described as similarly pious, though less active in the public sphere. al-Bartallī writes that he spent most of his time at home or in the mosque out of scrupulousness. He only went out if he had a specific purpose and was never seen loitering aimlessly. Rather, he spent his time in worship, teaching or studying.\footnote{al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. ʿAbd al-Wadūd Wuld ʿAbd Allāh, 229-30.}

Abū Bakr al-Ghallāwī, al-Ṭālib al-Amīn al-Ḥarashī and Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Khaṭṭāṭ represent the first generation of local Nāṣirī-affiliated scholars in Walāta. All three are documented as members of the brotherhood. Their scholarly and religious practice reflects patterns established in Nāṣirī communities in Morocco and elsewhere. However, the key question is whether these scholars succeeded in transmitting the Nāṣirī tradition to future generations of Walāti scholars. A survey of these scholars’ students shows that the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood remained influential in Walāta in the second half of the 12\textsuperscript{th}/18\textsuperscript{th} century through the spread of its texts and through scholarly and pilgrimage travel to Nāṣirī centers. Two works in particular appear to be linked to the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood in Walāta. The first is the \textit{Ḥikam} of Ibn ʿAṭāʾ Allāh al-Iskandarī, one of the works that Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī taught while in Taghāza. The transmission of the \textit{Ḥikam} in Walāta goes back to al-Ṭālib al-Amīn al-Ḥarashī, who studied the text with Aḥmad al-Tuwāṭī.\footnote{al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 66.} al-Bartallī mentions this as one of the texts which al-Talib al-Amin taught generally.\footnote{al-Bartallī, \textit{Fath al-Shakūr}, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 64.} A second important Nāṣirī text is al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī’s \textit{Dāliyya}. This poem praises Mahammad b. Nāṣir and outlines the Nāṣirī Sufi path.

\textit{Fath al-Shakūr} documents that al-Ṭālib al-Amīn transmitted the \textit{Ḥikam} to two of his students. The first was al-Bashīr b. al-Ḥājj al-Ḥādī al-Yalabī (d. 1197/1783), who also
studied with Abū Bakr al-Ghallāwī and other teachers. In addition to the Ḥikam, al-Bartallī notes that al-Yalabī studied a poem he calls “al-Yūsiyya” which likely refers to al-Yūsī’s Dāliyya. In addition to al-Yalabī, Fath al-Shakür notes that al-Faqīh al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad (d. 1173/1760) also studied the Ḥikam with al-Ṭālib al-Amīn. In addition, it appears that both al-Yalabī and al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad followed their teachers’ scholarly and ethical example. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad’s brief biography describes him as a thorough (muḥaqiq) and precise (muḍaqiq) teacher of all of the major Islamic sciences who also possessed noble characteristics.

Widening our scope, we can identify similar traits in the biographies of al-Ṭālib al-Amīn, al-Ghallāwī’s and al-Khaṭṭāt’s other students. For example, Sanbīr b. al-Wāfī al-Arawānī (d. 1180/1767) studied with Abū Bakr al-Ghallāwī and served as judge in Arawān. His biography in Fath al-Shakūr describes him as authoring several works, including a collection of fiqh responsa specific to Arawān. He, too, is described as having been attached to his library. Another of al-Ṭālib al-Amīn’s notable students was al-Qāḍī Ānd ‘Abd Allāh b. Aḥmad (d. 1172/1758-9), a member of the prominent Āl Shaykh b. al-Maḥjūb clan, who served as Walāta’s chief judge. Like his teacher, Ānd ‘Abd Allāh

115 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 80. al-Bartallī mentions this in the context of literary works studied by al-Yalabī. The Dāliyya was often studied as literature as well as for its moral and spiritual benefit. Its spread in the Sahara and Sahel will be discussed below. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥājj Muṣṭafā al-Ghallāwī (d. 1290/1873), wrote a commentary on the “Yūsiyya”. See Fath al-Shakūr, ed. ‘Abd al-Wadūd Wuld ‘Abd Allāh, 172.
119 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 102.
is described as a scrupulous ascetic who was generous and, out of his piety, did not fear anyone’s reproach. As a judge, he was revered for his impartiality and adherence to the truth. The aforementioned Sanbīr b. al-Wāfī al-Arawānī, Ānd ‘Abd Allāh’s contemporary, is quoted saying that, “were earlier generations of judges to meet him, they would give him his due.” al-Bartallī also notes that Ānd ‘Abd Allāh rendered his judgments through the application of legal maxims and theory which he derived through research rather than relying on the statutes contained in legal manuals. This closely reflects the methodology of taḥqīq applied by Ibn Nāṣir and other Nāṣīrī scholars in their jurisprudence.

C. The Second Generation of Saharan Nāṣīrī scholars

Beginning in the mid-12th/18th century, the hajj became the main means for Saharan scholars to enter the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood. Nāṣīrī sanads from the Sahara during this period make frequent mention of the aforementioned Āḥmad al-Ḥabīb al-Lamṭī’s most important students were Nukhtār b. Muṣṭafā al-Yadālī, Āḥmad b. Muhammad – n – al-Tāmklāwī (d.c. 12th/18th century), and ‘Abd Allah b. Abī Bakr al-Tanwājīwī (d. 1145/1733). Nukhtār al-Yadālī was the first to introduce the Nāṣīrī sanad in the Gebla region. His student and nephew Muḥammad al-Yadālī (d. 1166/1753) had a prolific and influential scholarly and spiritual career. al-Tāmklāwī was another Nāṣīrī pioneer from the Gebla who is credited with introducing al-Qaṣṭallānī’s Irshād al-

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120 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 167.
121 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 167.
124 Wuld Ākāḥ, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya, 205-6.
125 Wuld Ākāḥ, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shādhiliyya, 201-203.
Sārī in Saharan scholarly circles. al-Tanwājīwī studied with al-Lamṭī for a time on his return from hajj in the early 18th century. al-Bartallī writes that al-Tanwājīwī learned all seven canonical modes of Qur’anic psalmody, as well as additional, non-canonical modes. He also studied other disciplines, such as jurisprudence and language arts, and acquired an admirable collection of books that he brought home after completing his studies in Sijilmasa. Importantly, al-Tanwājīwī obtained al-Lamṭī’s ijaza to teach Qur’anic psalmody according to al-Lamṭī’s style. Upon his return home, he used this newly acquired knowledge and authority to campaign to reform the prevalent style of Saharan Qur’anic recitation:

[Upon his return, al-Tanwājīwī] found people making mistakes in their Qur’an recitation, pronouncing one letter in the place of another. This continued and increased, especially in the well-known case of the letter jīm. [So he began] to correct the recitation of the Qur’an, and did so with excellence and beauty. As a result, many came to him to benefit, and many learned from him and became leading Qur’an teachers whose example others followed… [al-Tanwājīwī] became the leading Qur’an teacher in all of Takrur during his lifetime, and his reputation traveled far.

In truth, al-Tanwājīwī’s reception was not as auspicious as al-Bartallī depicts. Though he did gain students, his reform campaign generated substantial opposition and debate among Saharan scholars.

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126 Wuld Ākāh, al-Tariqa al-Shādhiliyya, 205.
127 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 208.
128 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 208.
129 al-Bartallī, Fath al-Shakūr, ed. Muḥammad Ḥajjī, 208.
The Nāṣiriyya’s spread into the Gebla brought it into contact with the *maḥāra* system of education. *Maḥāra* is the Hassānī Arabic term for a mobile, rural school supported by pastoral Saharan communities. These institutions spread through the Sahara in the 12th/13th century. Wuld Ākāh writes that the well-known *maḥāra* of Mīnah-n b. Mūd b. Mālik (d. 1150/1738) graduated two important Nāṣirī scholars from this period. The first was Maska b. Bārak Allāh al-Shamshāwī who attained an *ijāza* from Aḥmad al-

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Khalīfa in 1117/1706. His classmate, Muḥammad al-Yadālī, was the most important Saharan Nāṣirī scholar of this period.

Muḥammad al-Yadālī was born in the Gebla in 1096/1685 as a member of a pastoralist, Berber zawāyā tribe. His family was respected for its piety and knowledge. al-Yadālī memorized the Qur’an at a young age and then dedicated himself to religious studies. His closest and most beloved teacher was his cousin, Nukhtar b. Muṣṭafā al-Yadālī, who was the first to introduce the Nāṣirīyya wirk in the Gebla via Aḥmad al-Ḥabīb al-Lamṭī. Muḥammad al-Yadālī, based his spiritual practice on love of the Prophet Muhammad, immersion in dhikr and Quran, and an adherence to sharīʿa norms. These come through strongly in his writings. al-Yadālī was the most prolific Saharan scholar of his period. While his predecessors composed didactic poems and commentaries, al-Yadālī authored some of the earliest prose works in the Sahara. These include Shiyaam al-Zawāyā, a chronicle of the history of the zawāyā tribes, and Amr al-Wālī Nāṣir al-Dīn, a hagiography of Nāṣir al-Dīn and his movement. His work al-Dhahab al-Ibrīz fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-ʿAzīz was the first original Saharan work of Qur’anic exegesis. He also wrote Salātu Rabbi, a poem in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad that was the first to adapt this genre of Islamic literature to the Hassānī poetic meter. Lastly, his text Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf is the earliest written expression of Saharan Sufism.

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133 Wuld Ākāh, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāhiliyya, 196-199.
134 Wuld Ākāh, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāhiliyya, 216.
135 Wuld Ākāh, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāhiliyya, 216.
137 Wuld Ākāh, al-Ṭarīqa al-Shāhiliyya, 220-2.
In his introduction to *Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf*, al-Yadālī writes that he composed the work as a conclusion and complement to a larger untitled work on theology. He defines Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) as the theology (*tawḥīd*) of the “select” (*al-khāṣṣa*) and states his intention to benefit Sufi practitioners caught between Islamic spirituality’s two extremes:

> When I saw my contemporaries (*abnāʾ al-zamān*) either devoted to inward reality (*al-haqīqa*) and preferring inner essences to outward states, or lost in the *shariʿa* and enthralled by the path of the great ones (*al-akābir*), I wrote [this commentary] to complete [*Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf*’s] benefit such that it would unite the exoteric with the spiritual path, and join the *sharīʿa* with inward truth (*al-haqīqa*).\(^{139}\)

The sources cited by al-Yadālī illustrate his immersion in a transregional Shādhili – Naṣīrī discursive field. He quotes often from major Sufi figures from the school of *sulūk*, such as al-Ghazzālī,\(^{140}\) Abū al-Ḥasan al-Shādhili,\(^{141}\) Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundi,\(^{142}\) al-Shaʿrānī,\(^{143}\) as well as al-Saraqūṣī’s *al-Mabāḥīth al-ʿAṣliyya*.\(^{144}\) He also cites many sources particular to the Moroccan milieu, including the *riḥla* of Muḥammad al-ʿAbdarī\(^{145}\) and Mayyāra’s commentary on *al-Murshid al-Muʾīn*.\(^{146}\) One of his most often cited sources is Aḥmad Zarrūq’s *Qawāʾid al-Taṣawwuf*.\(^{147}\) He also cites al-Yūsī.\(^{148}\) While *Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf* contains only one explicit reference to Ibn Naṣīr, it is quite

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\(^{142}\) al-Yadālī, *Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf*, 82-3.


\(^{144}\) al-Yadālī, *Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf*, 82, 85.


\(^{147}\) al-Yadālī quotes Zarrūq’s definition of *taṣawwuf* to begin his discussion of Sufism’s origins, and quotes him often through the *Khatimah*. See *Khātimat al-Taṣawwuf*, 75, 80, 92-3 and elsewhere.


**Nāṣirī Texts in Saharan Manuscript Archives**

Further evidence of the Nāṣirīyya’s Saharan legacy exists in the dissemination of its scholars’ texts throughout the region. Like their Moroccan counterparts, Saharan scholars affiliated with the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood engaged actively in text production and transmission. There is also abundant evidence that they carried Nāṣirī texts with them during their Trans-Saharan journeys.149 A series of searches in the Arabic Manuscript Management System (AMMS)150 – an electronic database containing records of eight manuscript libraries in the Sahara and Sahel – found records for over 130 copies of more than 30 distinct works by ten Nāṣirī scholars from Morocco who were active during the 11th/17th and 12th/18th centuries.151 These can be grouped into three general categories: works on theology (‘aqīda), works on Sufism, and works on Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh).

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149 Lydon discusses the Trans-Saharan book trade in detail. See On Tran-Saharan Trails, 100ff.
151 Table in the appendix.
A. Works in Theology

Collaboration between Nāṣirī and Saharan scholars in the realm of theology began as early as Aḥmad al-Ḥashtūkī’s career in Walāta during the 1080s-90s/1670s-80s. His fahrasa provides the earliest reference to the theological works of Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī in the region. Though al-Ḥashtūkī mentions transmitting al-Yūsī’s commentaries on al-Sanūsī’s works, these works are largely unaccounted for in Saharan manuscript libraries. Given Saharan scholars’ activity producing their own commentaries, and versifications in this discipline, it appears that locally produced works were preferred.

152 The AMMS contains only one record for al-Yūsī’s supercommentary (hāshiya) on al-Sanūsī’s al-Kubrā.
A notable exception to this trend are the treatises of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Abī Maḥallī (d. 1090/1679). Ibn Abī Maḥallī was a student of Mahammad b. Nāṣir who disowned his association with the Nāṣiriyya and initiated a reformist campaign to correct “signs of disbelief” in Sijilmasa in the 1080s-90s/1670s-80s. Part of this campaign was Ibn Abī Maḥallī declaring Sijilmāsa’s scholars to be non-believers (takfīr).153 The ensuing crisis (fitna) garnered Ibn Nāṣir’s condemnation as well as thorough scholarly refutations from fellow Nāṣirī scholars, namely al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī, Abū Sālim al-ʿAyyāshī, Muḥammad b. Mubārak al-ʿAnbarī, the mufti of Sijilmasa, and Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tastawuti.154 Nāṣirī opposition to Ibn Abī Maḥallī was so successful that none of his works survive in Moroccan libraries.155 However, according to AMMS, over a dozen copies of his treatises are found in the library of the 13th/19th century Tijānī reformer ʿUmar Tall (d. 1280/1864) in Segou, Mali.156 All of these are written in West African script which shows their local, Sahelian production.

Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Abī Maḥallī’s popularity in the Sahara-Sahel reflects the prominence of takfīr discourse among the region’s scholars during this period. Based on his works’ concentration in Segou, and the lack of information on their provenance, it’s unclear whether or in what way Muḥammad b. ʿUmar’s thought related to the ’aqīda

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154 Zarkī summarizes each of the author’s arguments in al-Kashf wa-l-Tabyīn, 41-51.
155 The Author was unable to located Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s works in the Bibliothèque Nationale de Maroc online catalog. Additionally, Jamāl Zarkī relies exclusively on copies of Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s works from Mali in his edition al-Kashf wa-l-Tabyīn.
156 ʿUmar Tāll’s library has been digitized by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and is available through their Gallica platform: https://gallica.bnf.fr/accueil/en/content/accueil-en?mode=desktop
movement that rose in response to Nāṣir al-Dīn and al-Imām al-Majdhūb. Nonetheless, Wuld al-Sālim considers the *fitnat al-talabā* in Sijilmāsa as a possible catalyst for this scholarly movement. He mentions that, in the early 12th/18th century, Muḥammad b. Mūḍī Mālik (d. 1151/1738) was condemned by his peers for his declaration that *taqād al-ʿāmma* was equivalent to *kufr*.157 This was also Muḥammad b. `Umar’s position decades earlier in Sijilmāsa. Evidence of Muḥammad b. `Umar’s legacy in West Africa is more clear. 13th/19th century reformers like `Uthmān dan Fodio (d. 1232/1817) and `Umar Tall employed *takfīr* discourse in their *jihād* campaigns against Muslim and non-Muslim rulers in Hausaland and Futa Toto, respectively. The presence of Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s works in `Umar Tall’s library suggests his influence on Tall’s thought. `Uthmān dan Fodio also engaged with Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s arguments in his *fiqh* responsa and in his theological works. While Dan Fodio praised Ibn Abī Maḥallī’s treatises, he did not approve of his extremism.158 It is possible that Ibn Abī Maḥallī represented a local and contemporary source of *takfīr* discourse for these reform movements.

Figure 5.5: The opening pages of one of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar’s works on the types of disbelief (kufr), as preserved in ʿUmar Tall’s library, Segou, Mali.159

B. Works on Sufism

There are only a few references to Nāṣirī works on Sufism in the AMMS database. The earliest of these would be Ibn Nāṣir’s al-Awjiba al-Nāṣirīyya. Though this text is classified as a work of jurisprudence, it contains substantial treatments of Sufism. As seen in Muḥammad al-Yadālī’s engagement with the Ajwiba, Ibn Nāṣir left a definite legacy in the Sahara as both a jurist and Sufi teacher. AMMS records two copies of the Ajwiba in Nouakchott and two in Timbuktu. There is little information on the Nāṣirīyya

in Timbuktu, so the presence of the Ajwiba is quite suggestive. AMMS also records a number of minor devotional works by Ahmad al-Khalifa. These include a written record of the Nasiri sanad attributed to al-Khalifa that is housed in Timbuktu, as well. In addition to Ibn Nasir and al-Khalifa, the prominent 12th/18th century Nasiri scholar, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Salam al-Bannani, is credited with a number of Sufi works in the AMMS database. One copy of al-Bannani’s comment on al-Salah al-Mashishiyya is preserved in the Boutilimit manuscript library. al-Salah al-Mashishiyya is a central work in the Moroccan Shadhilī canon.

The most prominent Sufi work by a Moroccan Nasiri scholar in the Sahara and Sahel is the Daliyya of al-Hasan al-Yusi, and its commentary, Nayl al-Amani fi Sharh al-Tahani, also by al-Yusī. In fact, al-Yusī is the most cited Moroccan Nasiri scholar in the AMMS database, with ten distinct titles and numerous miscellaneous works recorded. al-Yusī works also spread widely, with titles present in all of the database’s libraries. Among these works are al-Yusi’s supercommentaries on the theological works of al-Sanusi, his encyclopedic works al-Qanun, on epistemology, and Zahr al-Akam in lexicography, as well as his works on logic, his epistles and poetry. However, al-Yusi’s most transmitted work is his praise poem of Mahammad b. Nasir, al-Daliyya, and its commentary. According to AMMS records, 25 copies of the al-Daliyya/Nayl al-Amani can be found in Kano, a dozen in Segou and six in Timbuktu, along with a handful in Niamey and Boutilimit. While al-Yusī’s more academic works are concentrated in Saharan libraries, the Daliyya appealed more strongly to Sahelian audiences.
Figure 5.6: An excerpt from al-Hasan al-Yūsī’s “Nayl al-Amānī,” his commentary on *al-Dāliyya*, written in West African script.¹⁶⁰

Did the spread of the *Dāliyya* help propagate a specifically Nāṣīrī religious discourse? al-Yūsī’s text is regarded as a literary masterpiece and a comprehensive textbook in *sulūk*-oriented Sufism. al-Yūsī situates his discussion of Islamic spirituality around the personage of Ibn Nāṣir, whom he represents as the ideal spiritual teacher. While Saharan and Sahelian students may have studied the *Dāliyya* outside of a Nāṣīrī milieu, they necessarily would have come to know Ibn Nāṣir and his discourse through al-Yūsī’s work. For instance, here is how al-Yūsī introduces Ibn Nāṣir in the *Dāliyya*:

[Ibn Nāṣir] returned the religion’s face to being bright, white / shimmering, pleasing to every Unitarian

He rebuilt the religion’s foundation until it rose / Above the stars, standing on firm, towering pillars

Far from him was every darkness, doubt / Misguidance, deception and extreme\(^{161}\)

And here is al-Yūsī’s call for his reader to venture to study with Ibn Nāṣir, which is included in his commentary in *Nayl al-Amānī*:

Say to whoever has little knowledge and reverence, ‘Go to Darʿa so that this *shaykh* may benefit you, or that God may benefit you through him, with knowledge and piety that will never leave you. For truly, whoever has a camel who is hungry will seek its sustenance regardless of how far it may be, and God’s bounty is more entitled and deserving to be sought by a seeker, even if its home is faraway. It is not courageous for the sick person to sit, avoid seeking a doctor and turn away from the means of their healing. And the greatest and more repugnant illness is that of a heart obstinately opposed to guidance and repulsed by its Lord. This type of heart is most deserving of being healed by meeting God’s people.\(^{162}\)

Did the spread of the *Dāliyya* and its commentary help inscribe Ibn Nāṣir into the Sahara’s and Sahel’s cultural memory? Or did its readers, especially in the decades after Ibn Nāṣir’s death, only absorb its contents in the abstract? These questions remain unanswered. However, given the wide dissemination of al-Yūsī’s works, further inquiry is warranted to determine their effect on religious discourse in the Sahara and Sahel during the 11\(^{th}\)/17\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\)/18\(^{th}\) centuries.

C. Works on Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*)

AMMS records over a dozen works in Islamic jurisprudence by Nāṣirī authors spanning the 11\(^{th}\)/17\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\)/18\(^{th}\) centuries. The earliest of these are by Mahammad b.


Nāṣir himself. The Boutilimit library in Mauritania contains copies of Ibn Nāṣir’s *al-Waṣiyya al-Mushtamila ‘alā Manāṣik al-Ḥajj*, a short treatise detailing the ḥajj rites. We also find references to a work entitled *al-Riḍla ilā Bayt Allāh al-ḥarām*, also attributed to Ibn Nāṣir. This manuscript could be a copy of Ibn Nāṣir’s ḥajj diary, which has been heretofore unknown. The presence of these works illustrates the Nāṣiriyya’s influence on Saharan pilgrims. Additionally, copies of *al-Ajwiba al-Nāṣiriyya* are located in Nouakchott and Timbuktu, and a copy of Ibn Nasir’s didactic poem in Maliki *fiqh* is preserved in Kano.

Next, we find the works of Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī. al-Rasmuki is well known for his treatises on Islamic inheritance law and mathematics, and a number of these are preserved in libraries in Shinqīṭ, Nouakchott, Segou and Timbuktu. Among the works of Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s students, we find copies of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Warzāzī’s *Nawāzil Fiṣḥiyya* in Nouakchott, Timbuktu and Shinqīṭ. Shinqīṭ also houses a copy of Muḥammad al-Huḍaykī’s commentary on the *Risāla* of Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrāwānī. We also find the works of later Nāṣirī scholars in these libraries. Copies of two of Muḥammad b. Ṭabd al-Salām al-Bannānī’s works in the rules of adjudication (*ahkam al-qadā*) and legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) are housed in in Boutilimit.

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164 Outside of this reference, there is no record that Ibn Nāṣir ever wrote a ḥajj diary. However, when the author presented this information to Aḥmad Ṭamālī, he responded that there have always been rumors that such a text exists. Field Interview, December, 2016.
Shinqīṭ and Wadān in the Sahara. A number of works of al-Bannānī’s student Muḥammad al-Tāwūdī b. Sūda are also housed in Boutlimit, Shinqit and Wadan, as well as Nouakchott.

**Figure 5.7:** An excerpt from Aḥmad b. Sulaymān al-Rasmūkī’s treatise on Islamic inheritance law, entitled “Miftāḥ Ajniḥat al-Righāb fī Ma’rifat al-Farāʾīḍ wa-l-Ḥisāb.”

The proliferation of Nāṣirī legal texts in Saharan manuscript libraries reflects the roles Nāṣirī scholars played as jurists and judges in Saharan society. The popularity of Ibn Nāṣir’s *Ajwiba* and al-Warzazi’s *Nawāzil* shows that Saharan and Sahelian scholars consider the Nāṣiriyya’s worldview to be an authoritative frame of reference for legal opinions. Though we do not have access to al-Warzāzī’s text, our previous reading of Ibn

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Nāṣir’s Ajwiba, raises a few important questions. As noted, many of Ibn Nāṣir’s opinions seek to ground popular custom in the Prophetic sunna, a key objective of his broader religious discourse. Nonetheless, it’s unclear how this Nāṣīri perspective affected local Saharan jurisprudence. In al-Fatāwā wa-l-Ta’rīkh, Wuld al-Sa’d writes that Saharan scholars first begin to produce written fatwa collections during the late 11th/17th century, around the time the Nāṣīriyya began to proliferate in Walāta. However, Wuld al-Sa’d argues that, at this time, Saharan jurists began to base their judgments on prevailing customs (ʻurf) rather than the prevalent (mashhūr) opinions of the Mālikī school of law. While Ibn Nāṣir also does not bind himself to Mālikī precedent, the Ajwiba explicitly states his commitment to evaluating local customs in light of the Prophetic sunna. Even though Ibn Nāṣir’s sunna-centric discourse did not change the majority of Saharan scholars’ relationship to custom, did it have a legacy among those who read and consulted his Ajwiba? As we saw in our discussion of al-Tanwājīwī, the Nāṣīriyya’s discourse appealed to certain Saharan scholars but also met with sizable opposition.

Conclusion

The spread of the Nāṣīriyya in the Sahara and Sahel sheds valuable light on the development of this region’s religious institutions during the 11th/17th and early 12th/18th centuries. As our study suggests, Saharan communities strove to construct new systems of religious authority in the aftermath of the conquest of Timbuktu in 999/1591. In the face of challenges by religious reformers Nāṣir al-Dīn and al-Imām al-Majdhūb, Saharan

167 Muḥammad al-Mukhtar Wuld al-Sa’d, al-Fatāwā wa-l-Ta’rīkh (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmi, 2000), 42.
168 Wuld al-Sa’d, al-Fatāwā wa-l-Ta’rīkh, 43.
fuqahā’ developed a distinct scholarly tradition that promoted the primacy of the sharīʿa and Ashʿarī theology. The War of Shurr Bubba supported this tradition’s development. The triumph of the Banū Hassān extinguished the potential for an Imamate system to emerge in the Sahara. Additionally, subordination to the Banū Hassān encouraged zawāyā tribes to intensify their engagement with scholarly activities. The revival in transregional mobility after this conflict brought zawāyā scholars into contact with the Nāṣiriyya brotherhood in Southern Morocco and along the ḥajj route. Ibn Nāṣir’s spiritual tradition provided these scholars with access to discursive resources that supported their emergent intellectual tradition. Additionally, the Nāṣirī path promised to satisfy Saharan communities’ spiritual needs without posing a threat to the sociopolitical status quo.

In contrast to later forms of communal Sufism in the Sahara and the Sahel, the Nāṣiriyya spread informally through student-teacher bonds and through scholarly works rather than through a corporate, tariqa institution. In contrast to Morocco or the ḥajj route, there is no evidence that Ibn Nāṣir or Aḥmad al-Khalifa ever traveled to the Sahara. Nor is there evidence of Nāṣirī muqaddams in the region or any effort by Saharan Nāṣirīs to coordinate their activities with the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya in Tamgrūt. Nonetheless, the Nāṣiriyya’s spiritual and discursive tradition was very influential, especially among zawāyā scholars. In this way, we can relate the Naṣiriyya’s diffusion to Louis Brenner’s description of the development of Sufi brotherhoods in the region:

Participation in the turuq could therefore take the form of a personal religious discipline under the guidance of one or several spiritual masters, as well as a wider-ranging quest for the acquisition of efficacious prayers and ‘secrets’. In such conditions the concerns and interests of a given individual might take precedence over the demands of the tariqa as a corporate entity. It may be that before the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that turuq existed in West Africa in
this more diffuse form; it is probable that before this period many Sufis kept their affiliations secret, or at least private. In the eighteenth century with Sidi Mukhtar al-Kunti, and in the nineteenth century with al-Hajj ‘Umar al-Futi, the ṭuruq began increasingly to emphasize their distinctive identities and corporateness; concurrently they became public institutions.170

The Nāṣiriyya represents a transition from the informal, individualized, master-disciple practice of Sufism towards corporate ṭuruq. The Nāsiriyya’s spread in the Sahara created a class of like-minded religious scholars linked by a common discursive and devotional tradition. Nāsirī discourse appears to have limited individual religious expression in these communities within a šari‘a-centered, sulūk framework. However, the Nāṣiriyya’s boundaries seem to have been largely informal and rhetorical. There is no evidence that Saharan Nāṣirīs considered themselves to be part of a distinct corporate community.

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This table reflects data gathered from the West African Arabic Manuscript Database (WAAMD), available online at: [http://www.westafricanmanuscripts.org/home](http://www.westafricanmanuscripts.org/home). Titles and genres of works reflect WAAMD data unless otherwise noted. Detailed information about the works mentioned can be found in WAAMD by searching each author’s AMMS ID number. For detailed records, see: Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Dārʿī, “Author: Maḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Dārʿī,” West African Arabic Manuscript Database, accessed May 28, 2018.


| Author | Date | Source | Access Date | Description | Subjects
|--------|------|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------
| Rasmad al-Mard al-Mara'n al-Afric | May 28, 2018 | West African Arabic Manuscript Database | May 28, 2018 | Author, West African Arabic Manuscript Database | Arithmetic
| A. | May 29, 2018 | West African Arabic Manuscript Database | May 29, 2018 | Author, West African Arabic Manuscript Database | History
| Zayd al-Ilm al-'Azam | May 29, 2018 | West African Arabic Manuscript Database | May 29, 2018 | Author, West African Arabic Manuscript Database | Arithmetic
| Ibn Abi Rishat al-Jami | May 29, 2018 | West African Arabic Manuscript Database | May 29, 2018 | Author, West African Arabic Manuscript Database | History
| Adam b. Sulaym al-Hasan | May 29, 2018 | West African Arabic Manuscript Database | May 29, 2018 | Author, West African Arabic Manuscript Database | Arithmetic
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Conclusion

Epilogue: Nāṣirī Decline and the Emergence of New Spiritual Traditions

When Aḥmad al-Khalīfa died in 1128/1716, there was no clear successor to assume leadership of the Nāṣirī community. al-Khalīfa had no sons nor did he appoint a successor. Upon his passing, two candidates emerged whose bid to be the Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh indelibly altered the brotherhood’s history. The first was al-Ḥusayn al-Shuraḥbīlī (d. 1142/1730), one of al-Khalīfa’s oldest students and his closest scribe, who stepped in to manage the Nāṣiriyya zāwiya’s day-to-day management immediately after al-Khalīfa’s death. al-Shuraḥbīlī was a Berber and native of the Sūs, and he enjoyed the support of the lodge’s scholarly community. However, about a year into his tenure, al-Shuraḥbīlī’s faced a challenge from Mūsā b. Muḥammad al-Kabīr al-Nāṣirī (d. 1142/1729). Mūsā al-Nāṣirī was al-Khalīfa’s nephew, and had also served as al-Khalīfa’s scribe on several occasions. Though he did not enjoy as much support among Nāṣirī scholars, he had the backing of the extended Nāṣirī family – al-Khalīfa’s brothers who had abandoned Tamgrūt and their descendants. Mūsā claimed that al-Shuraḥbīlī did not have al-Khalīfa’s formal permission (idhn) to inherit his position as the Nāṣiriyya’s shaykh. In response, al-Shuraḥbīlī claimed that al-Khalīfa had named him his heir. This claim was accepted by al-Shuraḥbīlī’s supporters but Mūsā al-Nāṣirī demanded he produce documentary evidence of this appointment. al-Shuraḥbīlī did not respond, so Mūsā called on Dar’a’s ‘Alawī governor to intervene. In 1133/1721, Dar’a’s governor visited al-Shuraḥbīlī in Tamgrūt seeking evidence of his right to lead the zāwiya. However, al-Shuraḥbīlī was unable to satisfy his demand, and, consequently, the governor expelled him from
Tamgrūṭ.¹

Though Mūsā al-Nāṣirī succeeded in expelling al-Shuraḥbīlī, and securing control of the Nāṣirī zāwīya in Tamgrūṭ, his rise to power deeply divided the Nāṣirī community.² After his succession, many of the zāwīya’s scholars left Tamgrūṭ and took refuge in the Sharqāwīyya zāwīya in Bū Ja’d. Its leader, Muḥammad al-Mu’tī b. Sāliḥ al-Sharqāwī (d. 1181/1768), had been a student of al-Khalīfa and transmitted the Nāṣirī āmidd.³ Mūsā al-Nāṣirī also lost the support of Nāṣirī communities in the Sūs who embraced al-Shuraḥbīlī, their countryman, as al-Khalīfa’s true successor. They cut off their loyalty and financial support from the Tamgrūṭ zāwīya. Suffering from declining membership and dwindling revenues, Mūsā al-Nāṣirī embarked on a tour of the Sūs in an attempt to reassert his authority as the Nāṣirīyya’s shaykh. However, Mūsā al-Nāṣirī died of an illness during these travels and did not succeed in reasserting Tamgrūṭ’s authority in the Sūs.⁴ While Mūsā al-Nāṣirī restored the status of Muḥammad al-Kabīr’s descendants in Tamgrūṭ, his reliance on ‘Alawī assistance exposed Tamgrūṭ to ‘Alawī calls for reciprocity. No longer independent, the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya suffered from the heavy-handed treatment of successive ‘Alawī governors. These tensions only increased after Morocco once again fell into a period of civil war after the death of Sultan Mawlay Ismā‘īl al-‘Alawī

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¹ Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, Mūsā al-Nāṣirī’s son, discusses this succession dispute in detail. As a supporter of his father’s candidacy, he includes much evidence for al-Shuraḥbīlī’s failure to secure al-Khalīfa’s permission to lead the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya. See al-Durar al-Muraṣṣa’a, v. 2, 662-700. al-Mukhtar al-Sūsī relates this conflict from al-Shuraḥbīlī’s perspective in al-Maṣūl. See al-Maṣūl, v. 18, 240-4.

² Harrak writes that after Mūsā al-Nāṣirī’s succession, the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood continued to grow through the careers of al-Khalīfa’s students rather than through the efforts of its leaders. See “State and Religion”, 270-1.

³ Harrak notes that Bū Ja’d seems to have replaced Tamgrūṭ as Morocco’s leading scholarly center after al-Shuraḥbīlī’s and his supporters’ exile. See “State and Religion”, 83-4.

⁴ al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī, al-Durar al-Muraṣṣa’a, 708ff
(1139/1727). Nonetheless, as Tamgrūt’s prominence declined, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s light remained potent and flourishing through the careers of his and Aḥmad al-Khalīfa’s students. Even until the 13th/19th century, North Africa’s new generation of spiritual luminaries, such as ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbaḥ (d. 1132/1720),6 Aḥmad b. Idrīs (d. 1253/1837)6 and Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Sanūsī (d. 1275/1859)7 continued to seek out the Nāṣirī ṭīṣ as a source of spiritual benefit.

Mūsā al-Nāṣirī’s tenure, and the initiation of the Nāṣirī - ʿAlawī alliance, marks the routinization of the Maḥammad b. Nāṣir’s spiritual legacy. Now intertwined with state power, the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya grew increasingly oriented towards worldly and political gain. We see this in the tenure of shaykh Yūsuf al-Nāṣirī (d. 1783/1197). Yūsuf developed a close relationship with ʿAlawī Sultan Sīdī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allāh (d. 1790/1204). Yūsuf was present at Sīdī Muḥammad’s coronation and succeeded in persuading the Sultan to join the Nāṣirīyya brotherhood. Afterwards, Yūsuf and the

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5 See below.

6 According to O’Fahey, Ibn Idrīs studied with a certain Abū al-Qāsim al-Fāsī, the shaykh of the Nāṣirīyya zāwīya in Fez in the late 12th/18th century. Ibn Idrīs was also linked to the Nāṣirīyya via his teach ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Tāzī (d. 1206 or 1213/1792 or 1798), who was a student of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbaḥ and was affiliated with the Zayyānīyya zāwīya in Qanādsā, Algeria. See R. S. O’Fahey, Enigmatic Saint: Ahmad Ibn Idris and the Idrisi Tradition (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 38-46.

7 The seems to be considerable overlap between al-Sanūsī and the Nāṣirīyya. Khushaim considers al-Sanūsī to be a reviver of Aḥmad Zarrūq’s spiritual tradition. Vikor also writes that al-Sanūsī had studied with Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī in Fez, though he considers this to have been a scholarly and not spiritual relationship. However, he notes the emphasis that Sanūsī sources place on the Nāṣirīyya. Khushaim, Zarrūq wa-l-Zarrūqiyya, 172; Knut S. Vikor, Sufi and Scholar on the Desert Edge: Muhammad b. ʿAlī al-Sanūsī and His Brotherhood (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 49-50. We know from our study of the ḥajj in Chapter 4 that that Nāṣirīyya were active in the Ajdābiya region until at least the late 12th/18th century. Furthermore, Sanūsī texts document Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Sanūsī’s multiple lineages in the Nāṣirī ṭīṣ, via Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Bannānī, Aḥmad b. Idrīs and al-Ḥasan al-Yūsī. See Aḥmad al-Sharīf al-Sanūsī, al-Anwār al-Qudsiyya fi Muqaddamat al-Ṭarīqat al-Sanāsiyya (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1924), 33ff.
Nāširīyya enjoyed prestige in Sīdī Muḥammad’s court. The Nāširī shaykh traveled with the Sultan during his campaigns against the Portuguese in Māzāğān and Brīja in 1182-3/1768-9. Sīdī Muḥammad also granted shaykh Yūsuf authority to govern Dar’a’s religious affairs and granted the Nāširīyya a portion of the custom duties generated in the port of Essaouira. This alliance greatly increased the Nāširīyya zāwiya’s wealth and social prestige, with Nāširī scholars, such as al-Tawūdī b. Sūda, serving in influential positions in Sīdī Muḥammad’s administration. However, closeness to the ‘Alawī Sultan came at a steep price. After Yūsuf al-Nāširī’s death, Sīdī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh intervened to appoint ‘Alī b. Yūsuf al-Nāširī (d. 1233/1818) as his successor. This event and the Nāširīyya’s increased politicization only served to further tarnish their spiritual and scholarly reputation. Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Nāširī’s treatise, Kitāb al-Mazāyā fī mā Uḥdithā bi Umm al-Zawāyā, is a scathing rebuke of the way in which the late-Nāširīyya’s leaders had squandered Maḥammad b. Nāšir’s material and spiritual legacy.

The Nāširīyya’s fragmentation and decline created room for new spiritual traditions to emerge in Morocco’s religious field. The earliest of these grew around ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dabbāgh (d. 1132/1720), a saint who lived and died in Fez. al-Dabbāgh’s life and career is recorded in Kitāb al-Ibrīz min Kalām ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dabbāgh, a collection of his sayings and anecdotes compiled by al-Dabbāgh’s student, Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-
Sijilmāsī (d. 1157). The book opens with the story of al-Dabbāgh’s father, Masʿūd al-Dabbāgh, an adept of Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī (d. 1092/1681), himself a student of Maḥammad b. Nāṣir-Darʿī and a certain Sīdī Mubārak b. ʿAlī in Fez. al-Dabbāgh’s father married al-Fashtālī’s niece. Though ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh was an infant when al-Fashtālī died, they remained connected through dreams and their shared blood lineage. al-Sijilmāsī narrates al-Dabbāgh’s years-long struggle to find a beneficial spiritual teacher. However he relied on al-Fashtālī’s guidance, which he received in dreams, and his dedication to dhikr and praising the Prophet Muḥammad. In 1121/1709, al-Dabbāgh encountered al-Khiḍr, who gave him a litany based on a particular praise of the Prophet Muḥammad. al-Dabbāgh practiced this litany daily until he experienced enlightenment in 1125/1713. After that point he became the focal point of a new Sufi community in Fez.

Unlike Ibn Nāṣir, al-Dabbāgh was considered unlettered, having received nothing more than a basic education in the Islamic sciences. Rather than emphasizing religious scholarship, al-Dabbāgh’s spiritual approach centered on removing darkness from the soul through dhikr in order to enable its contact with God’s light and the light of the Prophet Muḥammad. In this way, his teachings reflect the path of ishrāq and jādhib. In an exchange between al-Dabbāgh and an anonymous religious scholar, al-Dabbāgh is asked whether true spiritual education (tarbiya) was alive in Morocco. In doing so, the

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13 al-Dabbāgh and al-Sijilmāsī, al-Ibrīz, 9.
15 al-Dabbāgh and al-Sijilmāsī, al-Ibrīz, 14.
16 al-Dabbāgh and al-Sijilmāsī, al-Ibrīz, 298.
petitioner refers to Zarrūq’s statement that spiritual education was cut off and that seekers should depend solely on faithfully following the Qur’an and Prophetic sunna. In response, al-Dabbāgh provides a comprehensive summary of Islamic spirituality, describing how the process of self-clarification (tasfiya) and purification (tathīr) has grown more involved and complex as people’s intentions have grown more worldly since the first centuries of Islam. Nonetheless, he asserts that spiritual education remains vital, though increasingly rare. Addressing Zarrūq, he states:

[ Spiritual corruption] was rampant in Zarrūq’s age and that of his teachers. Out of their sincerity to God and His messenger, peace be upon him, they pointed to people that they should turn away from the spiritual education that was growing so popular among those who practiced falsehood. So they left people in a safe place where they would have nothing to fear nor grieve, and this is to follow the sunna and the Qur’an. These are two things that whoever is guided by them will not go astray. [Zarrūq’s and other’s] statements [in this vein] were meant to be comprehensive advice. They did not intend, may God be pleased with them, that true spiritual education had been cut off… for indeed the Prophet’s light, peace be upon him, remains, his goodness is comprehensive, and his blessing is universal until the Day of Judgment.

While al-Dabbāgh did not establish a long-lasting or widespread spiritual community, his career is an early indication of the reorientation of Morocco’s religious field away from Nāṣirī-style sulāk. Kitāb al-Ibrīz relates many exchanges between al-Dabbāgh and religious scholars that illustrate a deep curiosity and appreciation for al-Dabbāgh’s inspired knowledge. Yet, while al-Dabbāgh did not criticize the sulāk tradition, his comments above do quietly assert the fact that, in the presence of a qualified teacher such as himself, book knowledge was not necessary to forge an intimate relationship with God.

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17 al-Dabbāgh and al-Sijimāsī, al-Ibrīz, 298.
18 al-Dabbāgh, Ibrīz, 299.
and the Prophet Muḥammad.

As the Nāṣirīyya struggled to regain their spiritual authority during the 12th/18th century, Morocco’s religious field turned increasingly towards the vertical, jadhb-based methodologies of al-Dabbāgh and his colleagues. Beginning the 1190s/1780s, a new community formed in northern Morocco’s Rif mountains around the Shādhilī Sufi scholar Muḥammad al-ʿArabī al-Darqāwī (d. 1239/1823).20 al-Darqāwī was a native of the Banī Zarwāl tribe and had studied spirituality in Fez with the well-known Shādhilī shaykh ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jamal (d. 1780/1194). al-Jamal taught his students to turn away from the world through mendicancy, immersing themselves in dhikr. He endorsed ḥadra, or a communal dhikr gathering, that included dancing and the melodic recitation of poetry.21 After his death, al-Darqāwī popularized al-Jamal’s spiritual tradition through his own community, the Darqāwiyya brotherhood.

al-Jamal’s career and the appearance of the Darqawiyya did not go unnoticed by the Nāṣirī scholars of the period. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī links al-Jamal and al-Darqāwī to a revival of innovative Sufi practices during the second half of the 12th/18th century. In Kitāb al-Mazāyā, he critiques the practice of visiting graves in groups and requiring all those in attendance to give charity. He views this as a reprehensible bidʿa.22 In his discussion, he criticizes a number of deviant Sufi groups. At the head of them is the “misguided party” of ʿAlī al-Jamal. al-Nāṣirī minces no words in assessing al-Jamal and his community:

I met and knew [al-Jamal]. He was a large, ruddy-faced man who would drag his robe on the ground behind him… He would come and go around Fez looking like a beggar. He rarely spoke to anyone. Often, I would run into him while leaving classes held by our shaykh [Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām] al-Bannāʾī… After his death, he gained more followers and you would see them wearing coarse woolen cloaks and baggy robes with large prayer beads around their necks. If you said, ‘Salām’, to them on the street they do not respond to you, nor are they the ones to greet you. Their custom was to stick out their hands and open them to ask [for money] from people without saying a word… They would gather [money] during the day and at night they would gather together to eat whatever they purchased with their proceeds. [Furthermore], in their gatherings they exchanged pseudo-theological claims, [discuss] Sufi stations, and would recite poems that alluded to spatial or directional constraints on the lofty Divine being. And they would dance to these odes as well.23

al-Nāṣirī goes on to describe his theological disputations with al-Jamal’s and al-Darqāwī’s students.24 al-Nāṣirī’s criticism revives several arguments employed by al-Yūsī and other Nāṣirī scholars against innovative Sufi practices during the 11th/17th century.

Despite opposition from scholars like al-Nāṣirī, al-Darqāwī’s community grew rapidly. By the end of the 12th/18th century, it had become one of the most popular brotherhoods in Morocco. Sulṭān Mawlay Sulaymān (d. 1238/1822) took note of this and tried initially to employ al-Darqāwī’s influence to benefit the ‘Alawī dynasty. Sulaymān used al-Darqāwī in 1207/1792 to intercede with his brother, Mawlay Maslama, who had launched a rebellion in Rif.25 However, in 1217/1802, al-Darqāwī’s supporters rebelled against the Turkish dey of Oran, and succeeded in defeating the Turkish forces in a number of skirmishes. After being pressured by the dey of Algiers to quell the rebellion, Mawlay Sulaymān dispatched al-Darqāwī to Tlemcen to meet with his Algerian

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23 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Mazāya, 137.
24 Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī, Kitāb al-Mazāya, 137.
followers. However, once al-Darqāwī listened to their complaints, he joined their uprising. Soon after, the residents of Tlemcen pledged their oath of allegiance (bay‘a) to Mawlay Sulaymān and al-Darqāwī gave them permission to pray for the Moroccan Sultan by name in the Friday sermon. Sulaymān was forced to send a new delegation to Tlemcen to reverse al-Darqāwī’s actions.26 After these events, Mawlay Sulaymān’s dealings with the Darqāwiyya and similar Sufi groups grew increasingly hostile.

Mawlay Sulaymān was well-educated and frequently played host to Nāṣirī scholars, such as Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī.27 A religious conservative, Mawlay Sulaymān abandoned his predecessors’ policies that conflicted with the sharīʿa, such as the head tax (mukūs) and cultivating tobacco. He was also known to be a member of the Nāṣirīyya. When he turned against Sufi groups like the Darqāwiyya, he employed a stern, sunna-centric religious discourse to justify his actions.28 In 1223/1808, Sulaymān attacked the Sharqāwiyya zāwiyā and imprisoned its leader. He also aggressively opposed the Wazzāniyya zāwiyā in the Rīf mountains, denying its sanctity (ḥurma), curtailing its influence in the region’s politics, and intervening in the selection of a successor of its shaykh after the death of ʿAlī b. Aḥmad in 1226/1811.29 That same year, Mawlay Sulaymān published a famous letter supporting the Wahhābī movement, then active in the Arabian Peninsula. This decree condemned popular celebrations at saint’s tombs and other common practices, but defended veneration of saints in general and the Prophet Muḥammad in particular.30 After this point, Sulaymān began suppressing the Darqāwiyya

29 Abu Nasr, A History of the Maghrib, 244.
30 Abu Nasr, A History of the Maghrib, 246.
and imprisoned many of its leaders, including al-ʿArabi al-Darqawi himself. al-Darqawi’s supporters eventually revolted against Mawlay Sulayman. In 1234/1818, they defeated the Sultan’s army at the battle of Zayyan and took him prisoner for a number of days. In 1236/1820, these same tribal forces laid siege to Meknes. In the midst of this crisis, Fez’s scholarly community agreed to impeach Sulayman and remove him from his position as Sultan. 31 Though Sulayman eventually regained his throne in 1822, he died shortly after.

Sulayman’s nephew and successor, Mawlay ʿAbd al-Rahman b. Hisham (d. 1275/1859), defused the Darqawi crisis by releasing al-ʿArabi al-Darqawi from prison and bringing his supporters into the ʿAlawi patronage system. 32

Having weathered Mawlay Sulayman’s persecution, the Darqawiyya continued to spread unabated across Morocco throughout the remainder of the 13th/19th century. This expansion came largely at the expense of the Nashiryya, many of whose members joined the Darqawiyya’s ranks. This was particularly true in the Nashiri stronghold of the Sūs. As had been the case with Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Salam al-Nashiri, many Sūsī Nashiri scholars opposed the Darqawiyya due to its embrace of apparently innovative religious practices. One of the Darqawiyya’s chief Nashiri opponents in the Sūs was Muhammad b. al-ʿArabi al-Aduzi (d. 1323/1905). Born into a scholarly family, al-Aduzi took over teaching duties at his father’s madrasa in the Jazula mountains when he was just 38 years old. He soon earned a reputation as a gifted scholar and jurist, and he emerged as a pillar of the Nashiri scholarly community in Sūs during this period. 33 al-Aduzi was also known for his strong

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and decisive speech which he used to call attention to religious improprieties in the Sūsī community. When the Darqāwiyya arrived in the Sūs in the early 14th/mid-19th century, Sūsī writes that, “[i]t contained certain features that he disliked and he fought against it violently, especially when it appeared before his gifted students and they embraced it – rather they were its leaders, and among them were well-known religious scholars (‘ulamā’).”34 al-Adūzī used poetry to attack the Darqāwiyya for the same practices criticized by Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām al-Nāṣirī, including their avoidance of greeting other Muslims.35 Sūsī writes that he fought as hard as he could but was “overcome by the waves” of his students who joined the Darqāwiyya.36

One of the many Nāṣirī scholars who left the brotherhood during this period was Muḥammad b. Masʿūd al-Maʿdarī (d. 1330/1912). His father, Sīdī Masʿūd, (d. 1319/1901), was a leading Nāṣirī scholar during the late-13th/19th century who established and led several religious colleges in the Sūs.37 Despite his efforts to propagate the Nāṣiriyya’s teachings during a time of intense competition with the Darqāwiyya, Sīdī Masʿūd was known to have never spoken ill of his Darqāwī neighbors. al-Sūsī writes that, one day, someone asked Sīdī Masʿūd about his neighbor, a Darqāwī shaykh named Sīdī Saʿīd al-Maʿdarī. Sīdī Masʿūd responded, “I only know what everyone else knows about them and what they do.”38 Sīdī Masʿūd’s son, Muḥammad, began to distinguish himself as a teacher when he taught as a substitute during his father’s absence from their madrasa in 1309-10/1892-3. When Sīdī Masʿūd returned, he recognized his son’s prowess and

34 al-Sūsī, al-Maʿsūl, v. 5, 159.
36 al-Sūsī, al-Maʿsūl, v. 5, 162.
decided to transition him into a full-time teaching career. Sīdī Masʿūd then left his teaching position to his son Muḥammad and settled in a new madrasa nearby.

Muḥammad b. Masʿūd quickly established himself as an outstanding teacher and scholar, authoring many didactic works and devotional works. He also served an important role as a judge. However, his life took a turn after his father’s death, when he left the Nāṣirīyya and entered the Darqāwīyya brotherhood. Muḥammad b. Masʿūd’s contemporaries write that his spiritual transition caused his behavior and pursuits to change completely. He gave up his teaching position and became an itinerant mendicant Sufi. He developed an affinity for spiritual states (ahwāl), during which he was known to denounce the pursuit of Islamic scholarship. He also adopted anti-social behaviors, such as refusing to greet other Muslims or return their greetings. A certain Sūsī historian named al-Rafākī notes that Ibn Masʿūd continued to be offered teaching positions in communities throughout his area but spent his time inducting adepts rather than leading study circles. Nonetheless, Mukhtar al-Sūsī describes Ibn Masʿūd as one of the Sūs’s greatest scholars and teachers, and over 60 notable scholars studied with him during his lifetime.

Competition between the Darqāwīyya and Nāṣirīyya across Morocco in the 13th/19th century disrupted many social institutions that had supported the Nāṣirīyya’s dominance over Morocco’s religious field a century prior. Mawlay al-ʿArabī al-Darqāwī’s discourse and community succeeded in shattering this hegemony. al-Darqāwī

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39 al-Sūsī writes that he was by far the most prolific scholarly writer of his age, though many of his works remained unfinished. See al-Maṣūl, v. 13, 118.
preached a simple message of abandoning attachment to the world while immersing one’s self in God’s remembrance. As the late-Nāṣiriyya grew increasingly intertwined with ‘Alawī power, the brotherhood’s original message of reverent love of God and the Prophet Muḥammad grew increasingly complex and abstract. Furthermore, the brotherhood’s leaders responded to challenges like the Darqūwiyya with vituperation, rather than with magnanimity or restraint. While more research is needed into this sea change within the Nāṣirī community, it seems likely that so many young Nāṣirī scholars flocked to the Darqūwiyya during this period because it felt sincere and lacked the trappings of status and influence that the Nāṣiriyya had come to flaunt. Once again, the currents of Morocco’s religious discourse shifted in new directions, and the country’s soul set itself on a new course on the eve of its surrender to French colonialism.

Though the Nāṣiriyya had lost its mainstream influence by the 13/19th century, its scholars remained influential especially in the realm of ḥadīth. ʿAlī b. Sulaymān al-Dimnāṭī (d. 1306/1888) was a Berber, Nāṣirī scholar from Morocco’s Middle Atlas mountains. During the mid-13th/19th century, al-Dimnāṭī led study circles in Marrakech and Tamgrūt, establishing himself as one of Morocco’s leading hadīth scholars. In addition to teaching, al-Dimnāṭī was a prolific author, composing supercommentaries on all six canonical hadīth collections, in addition to smaller works in Sufism, tafsīr and other disciplines.\(^2\) al-Dimnāṭī is a pivotal figure in the late-Nāṣiriyya’s discursive trajectory. His embrace of hadīth scholarship reflects both Ibn Nāṣir’s commitment to the

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discipline, as well as the growing influence of salafī-style religious discourse in Morocco under Mawlay Sulaymān. However, al-Dimnāṭī also displayed a deep spirituality. He wrote openly about his personal relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad, with whom and whose companions al-Dimnāṭī studied with for decades through dreams and visionary experiences. And while he was a staunch Naṣīrī, he saw the Naṣirīyya as an outstanding member of Morocco’s broader Shadhili spiritual community, within which he included the Darqāwiyya brotherhood. However, salafī discourse eventually came to dominate Naṣirī scholarly circles, seemingly at the expense of the brotherhood’s spiritual sensibilities.

The career Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī (d. 1315/1897) demonstrates this shift. Born and raised in Salé, al-Nāṣirī distinguished himself as a scholar prior to entering into government service during the reign of Mawlay al-Ḥasan I (d. 1311/1894). al-Nāṣirī is best known for his chronicle of Morocco’s political history, Kītāb al-Istiṣā‘ li-Akhbār Duwal al-Maghrib al-Aqsā’, which he completed after Mawlay al-Ḥasan’s death in 1311/1894. al-Nāṣirī also authored Ṭalʿat al-Mushtarī fī al-Nasab al-Jaʿfarī, which argued that Maḥammad b. Nāṣir was a genealogical sharīf. Historically, neither Ibn Nāṣir nor his immediate successors ever claimed Sharifian descent, claiming rather to be descedents of the Companion al-Miqdād b. al-Aswad (d. 33/652). Aḥmad b. Khālid al-Nāṣirī argued that this claim was incorrect, and asserted that Ibn Nāṣir was actually a descendant of Jaʿfar b. Abī Ẓālib (d. 8/629), and thereby a sharīf by blood. Ṭalʿat al-

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43 al-Samlālī, al-Iʿlām, v. 9, 257-8
44 al-Samlālī, al-Iʿlām, v 9, 259
Mushtarī is best understood as an attempt to reconstruct Nāṣirī religious authority around the inherent trait of Sharifian lineage as the influence of its religious discourse continued to decline. However, al-Nāṣirī’s support for the Nāsirīyya, and Sufi brotherhoods as a whole, did not last. In 1311/1893, he published Taʿzhīm al-Munna bi-Nuṣrat al-Sunna, which criticized the practice of communal Sufism in Morocco during the early-14th/late-19th century. This work is considered one of the earliest examples of salafī writing in Morocco. This salafī trend only intensified during the 20th century. Muḥammad al-Makkī al-Nāṣirī (d. 1414/1994) was a leading figure in Morocco’s independence movement who criticized communal Sufism as an impediment to his country’s fight against the French protectorate. In the 1950s-70s he served independent Morocco as ambassador and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs prior to ending his career as a leading scholarly figure in Rabat.

Conclusion

Nāṣir’s lineage and concludes that this was not an important issue during Ibn Nāṣir’s lifetime. See ʿAmālīk, Jawānīb, v. 1, 92-4.

46 ʿAmālīk, Jawānīb, v. 1, 92-4.
49 Najāt al-Marīnī, “al-Nāṣirī, Muḥammad al-Makkī,” in Maʿlumat Al-Maghrib (Salé, Morocco: Maṭābī Salā, 2005), v. 22, 7396. al-Nāṣirī is well-known in Morocco for his radio tafsīr of the Quran, which first broadcast in the 1950s, and continues to be broadcast every morning after fajr prayer.
“Whosoever of you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; and if he is not able to do so, then [let him change it] with his tongue; and if he is not able to do so, then with his heart — and that is the weakest of faith.”

– The Prophet Muḥammad

At the outset of our study we committed to analyzing the Nāṣirīyya’s history through their word; not merely their written works, but the religious principles, concepts and ethics that comprised their discursive tradition. We’ve attempted, as best as possible, to follow this word as far as it would take us ideationally and geographically. In doing so, we’ve assembled a detailed portrait of a Sufi movement whose critical role in religious life across Morocco, the Sahara and North Africa in the 11th/17th – 12th/18th century has heretofore remained largely unexplored. While our study is far from complete, we believe that it is an appropriate starting point for a deeper reevaluation of the religious history of Morocco, the Sahara and wider Muslim world at the dawn of the Modern period. Our concluding remarks will touch on these points of further inquiry.

One of our study’s main contentions is that Ibn Nāṣir stood apart from his peers in 11th/17th century Morocco by virtue of his perception of God’s light. This orientation expressed itself in the Nāṣirī discourse of reverent love. Reverent love equipped Ibn Nāṣir to address the social and religious divisions of the Maraboutic Crisis. This discourse also prepared him and his community to safely navigate the shifting political landscape of this period. The Maraboutic Crisis pulled many Sufi figures and communities into its fray. On the surface, the Nāṣirīyya appear to have been well-suited to join this conflict. By the early 1070s/1660s, Maḥammad b. Nāṣir and the Nāṣirīyya zāwiya enjoyed wealth, a wide base of popular and elite support and widely accepted religious authority, both in Morocco and along the North African hajj route. However, the politics of taqwā led Ibn
Nāṣir to chart a different path for himself and his community. Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣiriyya sought to change Moroccan religious life through piety, knowledge and love. Reverent love bound the Nāsirī community together. It motivated their mastery of the *sunna*, *ḥadīth* and *sharīʿa*. The pull of reverent love is what drew Ibn Nāṣir and his followers across thousands of miles of desert to perform *ḥajj* in Mecca. In other words, reverent love liberated Ibn Nāṣir and the Nāṣiriyya from the vicissitudes of tribal and Sultanic politics and the potential dangers of movement-oriented religious populism. In this way, Ibn Nāṣir’s unique legacy is the Nāṣirī model of freedom through devotion to God. This is what allowed the Nāṣiriyya to transcend the constraints of Moroccan sociopolitical life and spread their light across North Africa, the Sahara and the Middle East.

Maḥammad b. Nāṣir did not originate the notion of reverent love. Our reconstruction of the direct link between Ibn Nāṣir and ʿAlīhmād Zarrūq is a second unique contribution of our study. Previous studies have praised Zarrūq’s writings but written off his influence on later communities due to his failure to establish an eponymous religious community to transmit his teachings. Our research has proven this claim false. Zarrūq did leave a substantial legacy in North African Sufism. However, it existed on the margins during the 10th/16th century. We disagree with previous studies’ conclusions that Zarrūq’s lack of popularity was a result of the general populations resistance to Islamic scholarship and scripture. Rather, his teachings were out of step with the wave of *jadhb*-oriented spirituality that swept over the region during this period. A century and a half later, Ibn Nāṣir successfully revived Zarrūqī Sufism along Morocco’s Saharan frontier and quickly gained an abundant following across Morocco and from all elements of Moroccan society. It is simply that Zarrūq’s light was incompatible with his context. That light did
not die. When it reemerged through Ibn Nāṣir it flourished and changed the course of Moroccan Sufi history. This is another significant finding. While many historians have argued that the 10th/16th rise of the Jazūliyya marked a permanent shift in Moroccos’s religious field, we can now see that this was not the case. With the Nāṣiriyaa’s rise, the Jazūliyya’s influence waned across Morocco, particularly in its historic heartland of the Sūs. And despite their decline after the death of ʿAḥmad al-Khalīfa, the Nāṣiriyaa remained Morocco’s premier Sufi brotherhood until the rise of the Darqūwiyya in the late 12th/18th – early 13th/19th century.

A third important contribution of our study is our documentation of the The Nāṣiriyaa’s transregional spread. The formation of transregional Sufi brotherhoods is typically associated with the 13th/19th century. The Nāṣiriyaa’s history, and even that of Abū Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ in the 7th/13th century shows that Islam’s world system has long had the potential to support transregional religious networks.50 The Nāṣiriyaa’s wide range of influence also suggests the need to reevaluate the geography and periodization of the so-called Islamic revival of the 12th/18th century. Typically associated with figures like Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (d. 1206/1792), this revival emphasized, inter alia, the need to revive the sunna through the study and application of ḥadīth, criticism of taqlīd, and calls to reform popular religious practices.51 While more work is needed to fully elaborate the Nāṣiriyaa’s relationship to this later movement, we are in a position to record some preliminary observations.

Our study thoroughly documents the Nāṣiriyya’s commitment to reviving the sunna and the study of hadīth. As far as we know, this is the first conclusive evidence of a local hadīth revival movement in Morocco, the Sahara and along the North African hajj route in the mid-11th/17th century. Furthermore, through the hajj, Nāṣirī hadīth scholars had substantial interactions with the pioneers of the 12th/18th century Islamic revival in the Middle East, including Muḥammad al-Bābilī, ʿAbd Allāh b. Sālim al-Bāṣrī and Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī.52 While historians have typically viewed the spread of Islamic revivalist thought as moving out from the Middle East, the Muslim world’s purported “center”,53 the Nāṣiriyya’s history shows something different. Muḥammad b. Nāṣir was already an established shaykh and hadīth scholar prior to performing his first hajj in 1070/1660. His approach to the hadīth sciences was shaped by Aḥmad Zarrūq’s spirituality, itself a product Zarrūq’s studies in Morocco and the Middle East. Ibn Nāṣir was also shaped by the methodologies of his hadīth teachers, all of whom were Moroccan, though some, like al-Mirghīthī, had traveled to the Middle East on hajj. Yet, as we saw in Chapter 3, Ibn Nāṣir’s taḥqiq in hadīth and fiqh was seen as a particularly Maghribī intellectual trait. Furthermore, the Nāṣirī hadīth tradition flourished and spread on its own in Morocco, the Sahara and along the North African hajj route. This is evident in the career of Aḥmad al-Hashtūkī, as discussed in Chapter 4, who spread the teaching of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Taghāzū and along the hajj route prior to arriving in the Ḥijāz. It is also worth considering Aḥmad Zarrūq’s direct role in the 12th/18th century Islamic


53 Levtzion and Voll, eds., Eighteenth Century, 9ff.
revival. In addition to the Nāṣiriyya, his sunna-centric discourse lived on in Egypt through the hadīth scholars of the al-Laqqānī family.

Furthermore, there seem to be clear parallels between the Nāṣiriyya and later ‘Neo-Sufi’ communities. Scholars have used the term “Neo-Sufism” to refer to the emergence of reformist Sufi communities in the late 12th/18th century that emphasized following the sunna, were more centralized than earlier communities, and took root in rural, agrarian communities. These ‘Neo-Sufi’ communities also tended to be politically active. The Nāṣiriyya are directly linked to Neo-Sufism through Aḥmad b. Idrīs and Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Sanūsī, both of whom acquired and transmitted the Nāṣirī sanad, along with other Sufi lineages. In terms of discourse, the Nāṣirī emphasis on following the sunna, studying hadīth and upholding pious ethics is mirrored by these later figures. The Nāṣiriyya also employed the term “the Muḥammadan way” (al-τarīqa al-muḥammadiyya) which has been associated with “Neo-Sufism.” Lastly, the Nāṣirī community model, centered around teaching zāwiyas, also seems to resemble the organizational structures adopted by Neo-Sufis, namely al-Sanūsī. As we saw in Chapter 4, several Nāṣirī-affiliated communities across the North African hajj route adopted this model as early as the late 11th/17th century. Nāṣirī influence remained strong across this region as late as the late 12th/18th century. In conclusion, is it possible that the Nāṣiriyya directly contributed to or even inspired the 12th/18th Islamic revival in the Middle East? Absolutely. However, this line of inquiry has not yet been explored.

Lastly, we would like to conclude just as Maḥammad b. Nāṣir concluded his well-known devotional poem *al-Duʿāʾ al-Nāṣirī*:\textsuperscript{55}

O Lord! Send your praise upon the Chosen One, / Your praise which completely suffices his worth.

Your praise that befits his affair, / And which suits his elevated stature.

Then send your praise upon his noble family and upon / his pure companions and those who follow their example.

Praise be to God by whose praise / The seeker fully attains their goal.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{56} al-Darʿī, *The Prayer of the Oppressed*, 72-5. Translation by the Author.
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